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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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BBMP bans sale of meat ahead of Ram Navami

BENGALURU, 4 APRIL

In view of the Rama Navami celebrations, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has announced a ban on sale of meat on Sunday. In a press release, the BBMP's Animal husbandry department said that the sale of meat and animal slaughter stands prohibited under the jurisdiction of BBMP on the occasion of 'Sri Rama Navami' on 6 April. Every year on Rama Navami and other religious events, there is a ban on the sale of meat and animal slaughter. *—Salar News*

US revises tariff on India, down from 27 pc to 26 pc

NEW DELHI, 4 APRIL

The United States has revised downwards the import duties to be imposed on India from 27 per cent to 26 per cent, according to a White House document. These duties will come into force from 9 April. While announcing the reciprocal tariffs on Wednesday, US President Donald Trump held up a chart which indicated that India would be charged 52 per cent tariffs, including currency manipulation and trade barriers, and America would now charge India a discounted reciprocal tariff of 26 per cent. Earlier, the White House documents showed a 27 per cent duty on India. However, as per the latest updates, it has been revised downwards to 26 per cent. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3,6,7

Not in race for TN BJP prez post, says Annamalai

BENGALURU, 4 APRIL

Tamil Nadu BJP President K Annamalai on Friday said he was not in the race for the post of state unit chief since there is no scope for a contest or competition in his party and the president is elected unanimously. Speaking to reporters, Annamalai, when asked whether he is part of the race for the post of Tamil Nadu BJP president, said: "I am not in the race for the post of the new state president. I am not ready for any quarrel (related to the next chief and whether he has any preference for any particular leader) and I am not in the race." Annamalai said the state unit president is unanimously elected and there is no contest or competition for the top post unlike other parties. *—PTI*

BJP man dies by suicide in City, blames Cong men

BENGALURU, 4 APRIL

A BJP worker allegedly died by suicide at his Bengaluru office in Nagawara on Friday. He alleged that an FIR filed against him by Congress leaders over a WhatsApp post drove him to kill himself. The deceased Vinay Somaiah, 35, accused Congress' Virajpet MLA AS Ponnanna, Madikeri MLA Mantar Gowda and party worker Thennir Mahina of harassing him. All three have been booked for abetment of suicide. He was earlier arrested over an FIR filed by Mahina. Somaiah was accused of making derogatory posts about Ponnanna and Gowda. Though he was released, Somaiah's family member told Salar News that he was disturbed since the incident. *—Salar News*

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PARL PASSES WAQF BILL; OPPN KNOCKS ON SC DOOR

Cong, AIMIM call it arbitrary & unwarranted interference

NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW 4 APRIL

Congress MP Mohammad Jawed and AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi on Friday challenged the validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025 in the Supreme Court, saying it violated constitutional provisions.

Jawed's petition, filed through advocate Anas Tanwir, said the proposed law discriminated against the Muslim community by "imposing restrictions that are not present in the governance of other religious endowments".

Jawed's plea alleged the Bill imposed "arbitrary restrictions" on Waqf properties and their management, undermining the religious autonomy of the Muslim community.

Jawed, a Lok Sabha MP from Kishanganj in Bihar, was a member of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the bill and alleged in his plea that the it "introduces restrictions on the creation of Waqfs based on the duration of one's religious practice".

"Such a limitation is unfounded in Islamic law, custom or precedent and infringes upon the fundamental right to profess and practice religion under Article 25," it said.

Owaisi's plea was filed by advocate Lzafeer Ahmad.

The plea claimed the restriction discriminated against persons who had recently converted to Islam and wish to dedicate property for religious or charitable purposes, thereby violating Article 15 of the Constitution.

The plea said an amendment to the composition of the Waqf Board and the Central Waqf Council mandated inclusion of non-Muslim members in Waqf administrative bodies, which was an "unwarranted interference" in religious governance unlike Hindu religious endowments, which remain exclusively managed by Hindus under various state enactments.

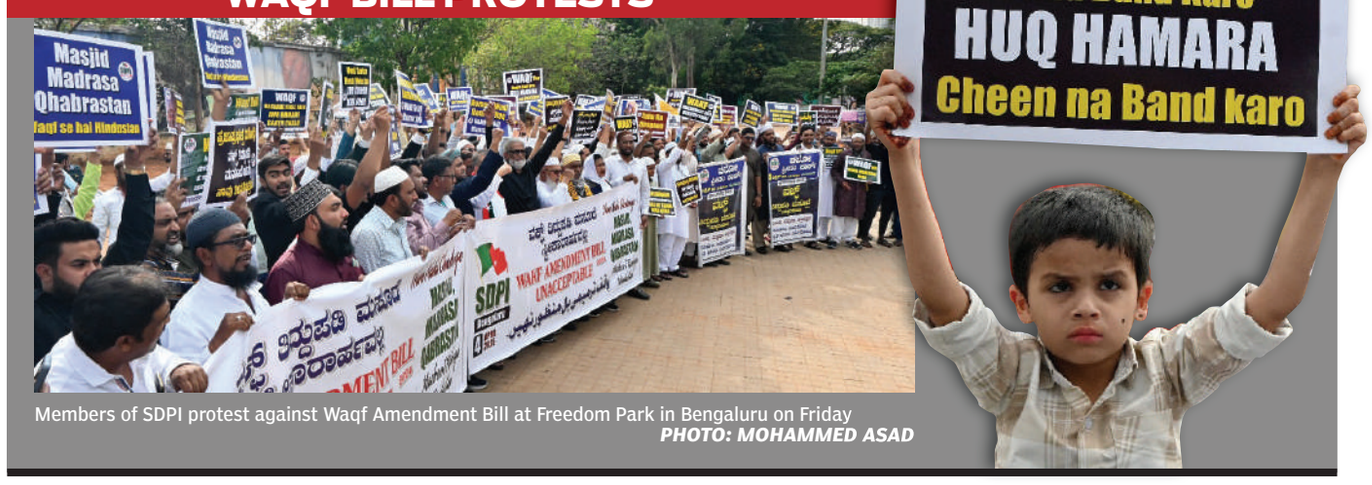
"This selective intervention, without imposing similar conditions on other religious institutions, is an arbitrary classification and violates Articles 14 and 15," it said.

Article 15 deals with prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.

The plea claimed the Bill omitted the concept of "Waqf-by-user". The doctrine of "Waqf-by-user" was duly affirmed in the apex court's verdict in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute case of Ayodhya, it added.

The All India Shia Personal Law Board too said they would approach the Supreme Court against the Bill. *—PTI*

WAQF BILL PROTESTS



Members of SDPI protest against Waqf Amendment Bill at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Friday
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets Bangladesh Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus at the 6th BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok **PHOTO: PTI**

Modi & Yunus discuss safety of minorities, Hasina

BANGKOK, 4 APRIL

In his first meeting with Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged India's concerns over the safety of minorities, including Hindus, and conveyed that any rhetoric that vitiated the environment was best avoided.

During the 40-minute meeting that took place on the sidelines of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral and Technical Cooperation (BIMSTEC) summit here, Modi also underscored India's support for a democratic, stable, peaceful, progressive and inclusive Bangladesh.

On the issue of minority attacks, Modi said that he expected the Bangladeshi government to ensure their security and thoroughly investigate cases of atrocities against them. Modi also expressed his conviction that all issues of mutual interest between the two countries would continue to be addressed and resolved bilaterally through constructive discussions, in the interest of their long standing and mutually beneficial bilateral relationship.

Yunus on the other flagged the issues of the extradition of deposed Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and border killings.

This was the first meeting between Modi and Yunus since Hasina's ouster in August last year. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval were also present during the meeting.

"I reiterated India's support for peace, stability, inclusivity and democracy in Bangladesh. Discussed measures to prevent illegal border crossings and expressed our serious concern for the safety and well-being of Hindus and other minorities," Modi said. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

MODI AVOIDS CHINA DURING B'DESH MEET

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's talks with Bangladesh Chief Advisor Mohammed Yunus notably excluded any discussion China. Bangladesh's shift towards China was ostensible during Yunus' meeting with the Chinese premier Xi Jinping who pledged $2.1 billion in loans, investments, and grants to Bangladesh. Importantly, China will participate in the Teesta River project. India has long been involved in discussions over Teesta's water-sharing but failed to finalize an agreement with Bangladesh. Yunus also urged Beijing to extend its economic influence to Bangladesh, controversially mentioning that the seven northeastern states of India are landlocked, calling Bangladesh the only guardian of the ocean. *—PTI with agencies*

SC dismisses review of electoral bonds ruling

NEW DELHI, 4 APRIL

The Supreme Court of India has rejected a petition seeking to review its decision regarding the confiscation of Rs 16,518 crore received by political parties through the 2018 electoral bond scheme. A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra dismissed the review plea filed by Khem Singh Bhati, reaffirming the decision made on 2 August 2024.

On 26 March, the bench stated, "The review petition is dismissed in terms of the signed order," and did not grant Bhati's request for an open-court hearing.

Earlier, in a landmark ruling on 15 February 2024, a five-judge Constitution bench headed by former Chief Justice DY Chandrachud deemed the electoral bond scheme unconstitutional, citing violations of Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. Consequently, the State Bank of India, which administered the scheme, provided data to the Election Commission for public transparency.

Bhati's petition argued that the electoral bond scheme was invalid from its inception due to the ADR ruling, claiming the legislation that supported the scheme should have been treated as null and void. He asserted that evidence revealed a quid pro quo relationship between donations and benefits received by corporate donors, contradicting the Supreme Court's earlier findings.

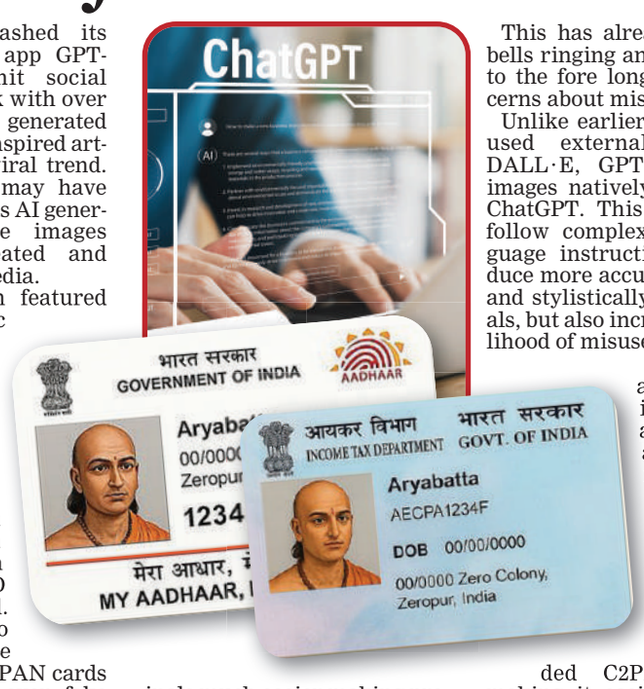
Ultimately, the court's refusal to reconsider its ruling underscores the ongoing scrutiny surrounding political funding in India. *—PTI*

DIGI 'JATRA'

ChatGPT + Indian jugaad makes fake Aadhaar cards

As OpenAI unleashed its image generation app GPT-4o's, dopamine hit social media went berserk with over 700 million images generated and studio Ghibli inspired artwork leading the viral trend. The creative run may have taken a dark turn, as AI generated Aadhar like images began being created and shared on social media.

Some posts even featured photorealistic mock-ups of India's unique ID card, showing fabricated names and portraits ranging from ordinary users to public figures like Sam Altman and Elon Musk and even Aryabhatta with QR codes and ID numbers attached. Users have also managed to generate fake passports and PAN cards and voter ids and even fake payment receipts which makes the work of cyber criminals much easier making production of fake documents much more faster.



This has already set alarm bells ringing and has brought to the fore longstanding concerns about misuse of AI.

Unlike earlier versions that used external tools like DALL·E, GPT-4o generates images natively from within ChatGPT. This enables it to follow complex natural language instructions and produce more accurate, nuanced, and stylistically diverse visuals, but also increases the likelihood of misuse.

Tech users are questioning how the app was able to access information about real Aadhaar cards and PAN cards to train its GPT-4o model. However, OpenAI says it has embedded C2PA metadata, making it easier to identify whether an image was generated using GPT-4o. *—Agencies*

Manoj Kumar, also known as Bharat Kumar was known for his patriotic films **PHOTO: X**

MANOJ KUMAR, ICON OF INDIAN CINEMA, DIES AT 87

MUMBAI, 4 APRIL

Renowned actor and filmmaker Manoj Kumar, affectionately known as 'Bharat Kumar', passed away at the age of 87 due to age-related health issues at Kokilaben Ambani Hospital in Mumbai on Friday morning.

Kumar, who embodied the spirit of India in films such as "Upkar", "Purab Aur Paschim", and "Roti, Kapda Aur Makaan", had been battling multiple health problems and had been largely bedridden in recent years. His son, Kunal, confirmed that he had recently been treated for pneumonia.

His last rites will be conducted on Saturday at Pawan Hans crematorium in Mumbai. Kumar leaves behind his wife, Shashi, and two sons.

Tributes have poured in from across the country, including poignant messages from President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The prime minister noted Kumar's contribution to instilling national pride through his iconic roles.

Born Harikrishan Goswami in Abbottabad, India, Kumar's illustrious career spanned decades, making an indelible mark on Indian cinema with his patriotic zeal and memorable melodies. *—PTI*

24-7-1937
4-4-2025

WHEN THE PM ASKED HIM TO MAKE A FILM:
Manoj Kumar got a call from Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, who invited him for tea at his residence. The Prime Minister then asked him to make Upkar to inject patriotic fervour during the 1965 India-Pakistan war.

FILM CAREER:
MADE HIS DEBUT IN 'FASHION' (1957)

First leading role in 'Kaanch Ki Gudiya' (1961)

First commercial success in a leading in 'Woh Kaun Thi?' (1964)

NOTABLE FILMS:
- 'Hariyali Kur Rasta' (1962).
- 'Purab aur Paschim' (1970).
- 'Mera Naam Joker' (1970) with the great showman Raj Kapoor.

AWARDS:
- Won Second Best Feature Film at National Film Award for 'Upkaar' (1968).
- Honoured with a Padma Shri Award (1992).
- Honoured with a Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award (1999).
- Honoured with Kishore Kumar Award (2008).
- Honoured with a Raj Kapoor Award (2010).
- Honoured with Dadasaheb Phalke Award (2015).

City gym trainer dies in late-night scooter crash

BENGALURU, 4 APRIL

A 29-year-old gym trainer died in a road accident early on Friday morning after losing control of his speeding scooter in Ashok Nagar. The incident occurred around 1.35am near the Ashok Nagar Traffic Police Station. Identified as Abhishek, a resident of Hosapalya in Bommanahalli, he was riding from Hosur-Lashkar Road towards Anepalya Junction when the mishap occurred. Reports indicate that he was not wearing a helmet and was travelling at high speed when he lost control while negotiating a turn. Suffering a severe head injury, Abhishek fell unconscious and was taken to St Philomena's Hospital, where he died by 2.15am. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: SALAR

BBMP takes action over illegal digging of road

BENGALURU, 4 APRIL

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has filed a First Information Report (FIR) against property owner Jyothi R in the Dasarahalli zone for illegal road digging at RK Layout, 3rd Cross Road. The digging, conducted on 31 March 2025 without the necessary permissions, resulted in damage to public property. Zonal Commissioner Satish instructed officials to take legal action, prompting a site inspection led by Chief Engineer Basavaraj Kabade, which confirmed the unauthorised work. Following this, the Assistant Executive Engineer lodged a complaint at Bagalagunte Police Station, resulting in the FIR. BBMP sources emphasised the organisation's commitment to a zero-tolerance policy against unauthorised civic activities, indicating that further legal measures are forthcoming. *—Salar News*

2 men blackmail 68-year-old after honeytrapping him

BENGALURU, 4 APRIL

In a striking instance of blackmail masquerading as a honeytrap, the Koramangala police have arrested two men, Ajay, a hotel operator, and his associate Abhi, for allegedly trying to extort Rs 2 crore from a 68-year-old retired Assistant Executive Engineer by threatening to release a compromising video. Ajay, reportedly struggling financially, conspired with Abhi and an absconding accomplice, a car driver, believing the retired engineer was affluent. They falsely claimed to have incriminating footage involving a 25-year-old woman. After being threatened, the victim approached the police, leading to the duo's arrest, while a manhunt is underway for the third suspect. Authorities are investigating potential past victims of similar tactics. No women have been implicated in the case so far. *—Salar News*

BMRCL PLANS TO LAUNCH YELLOW LINE IN JULY

This 19-km line connects RV Road to Bommasandra

BENGALURU, 4 APRIL

After a series of missed deadlines and long public anticipation, the Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has now set its sights on launching the Yellow Line Metro by the first week of July. This 19-km line connecting RV Road to Bommasandra is expected to offer a much-needed relief to commuters in the city's southern corridor.

BMRCL Managing Director Maheshwar Rao M said on Friday, "We have received two trains, and we are now going for the regulatory approvals, including oscillation trials and signalling testing. Following that, approval from the Commissioner of Metro Rail Safety (CMRS) will be obtained. Hopefully, we will complete the tests by the end of this month. "

The Yellow Line will be the first in Bengaluru to operate driverless metro trains. Delays in the delivery of the rolling stock pushed back the commissioning schedule multiple times. Of the six trains ordered, only two are currently with the BMRCL, while two more are expected shortly.

Yellow Line will be the first to operate driverless metro trains **PHOTO: X**

The third train is expected by 28 April and the fourth by June first week. The BMRCL plans to commence operations on the line with these four trains. "We plan to operate one train every 30 minutes initially," Rao said.

Once the fourth train arrives, the central railway safety authorities will conduct inspections. Once approved, BMRCL will seek final clearance from the State government. "We may opt for a three to five station gap model, adjusting frequency and stops based on demand," a BMRCL official said.

BMRCL has been under pressure from both the public and civic planners to open the Yellow Line, which is a critical link connecting the industrial zones of Bommasandra with the City. *—Salar News*

NAMMA METRO YELLOW LINE STATIONS

Rashtreeya Vidyalaya Road • Ragigudda • Jayadeva Hospital • BTM Layout • Central Silk Board, • Bommanahalli (Roopena Agrahara), • Hongasandra (Garvebhavi Palya), • Kudlu Gate, Singasandra • Hosa Road • Beratena Agrahara • Electronics City, • Infosys Foundation Konappana Agrahara • Huskur Road • Biocon Hebbagodi • Delta Electronics • Bommasandra.

STATEWIDE PROTEST LIKELY

B'luru lorry owners threaten statewide strike over fuel hike

BENGALURU, 4 APRIL

The Federation of Karnataka State Lorry Owners and Agents Association (FKSLOAA) has issued a warning of a statewide strike in response to the recent hike in diesel prices.

A crucial meeting has been scheduled for Saturday to finalise their decision.

"The price of diesel has increased twice since the Congress government assumed office. We are convening on Saturday to address this issue and are planning a strike next week," stated GR Shanmugappa, president of FKSLOAA.

On 1 April, the state government raised the sales tax on diesel by 2.73 per cent, resulting in a Rs 2 increase per litre. Diesel prices in Bengaluru have now reached Rs 91.02 per litre. The government has justified the increase, highlighting the necessity to bolster revenue for developmental projects.

PHOTO: PTI

However, the hike has attracted intense backlash from transporters, who argue that escalating fuel costs will severely impact their operations. Industry experts caution that increased transportation costs could lead to a rise in prices for essential goods, further straining consumers already grappling with inflation.

A lorry strike could impede the movement of goods across Karnataka, potentially causing shortages and delays in supply chains. *—Salar News*

MATTER OF PROPRIETY

Children join their parents to protest against the Waqf Bill passed in the Parliament, at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Friday. The protest was organised by SDPI (Social Democratic Party of India) **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

CM seeks central funding for Mysuru airport expansion

MYSURU, 4 APRIL

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has formally requested the Union government to allocate Rs 101.84 crore for the shifting of utilities required for the expansion of the Mysuru Airport runway. In a letter addressed to Union Minister of Civil Aviation Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu, which was shared on his X account, the Chief Minister highlighted the historical agreement made between the State government and the Airport Authority of India (AAI) on 6 October 2005, wherein the State government transferred 240 acres of land for the runway expansion.

Additionally, the project necessitates Rs 319.19 crore to purchase the land from farmers, with the final stages of the land transfer to AAI underway. According to the stipulated agreement, AAI is responsible for covering the complete costs associated with the airport's upgrades and enhancements.

Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah meets Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu, in New Delhi, on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

Siddaramaiah pointed out that the Cauvery Neeravari Nigam Limited (CNNL) and KPTCL require Rs 70 crore and Rs 31.82 crore, respectively, for the relocation of seven canals, high-tension lines, and electric poles. He urged the Union government to provide the necessary funding for these crucial utility adjustments. The Chief Minister emphasised that once the required funds are allocated, AAI would be able to proceed with the airport expansion and other related works as per the planned schedule. *—Salar News*

DKS urges Centre to notify Alamatti Dam height increase

DELHI, 4 APRIL

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has called on the Union Government to issue a Gazette notification regarding the proposed increase in the height of the Alamatti dam. Speaking at a press conference after meeting with Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Patil, Shivakumar stated that the minister assured him that a meeting would be convened with representatives from the affected riparian states to discuss the matter further.

Shivakumar highlighted that the water-sharing agreement between these states has long been established, with only the Gazette notification remaining. He added that land acquisition for the dam's enhancement has already been completed and urged the government to classify the project as a national endeavour.

DK Shivakumar wants a meeting between affected states **PHOTO: PTI**

In addition to discussing Alamatti, Shivakumar addressed several other projects, including Upper Bhadra, Kalasa-Bhanduri, and Yettinahole. He noted that the Supreme Court is expected to hear the Mekedatu case soon but acknowledged the political opposition from Tamil Nadu concerning this initiative.

The Deputy Chief Minister also raised concerns about delays in environmental clearances for the Kalasa-Bhanduri project and requested financial support for the Yettinahole project, which is critical for providing drinking water. He expressed optimism regarding the Union Minister's responses on these issues, particularly regarding the river linking project connecting the Cauvery, Krishna, and Godavari rivers.

—Salar News

TANKER TO THE RESCUE

Vidhana Soudha gets its fill from a water tanker in Bengaluru on Friday. Some parts of Bengaluru are already paying for tankers even as BWSSB warns citizens to use water diligently to avoid a crisis like last year. With the mercury rising and a water crisis looming, it is yet to be seen if the City can get its act together this year around **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

In Parl, Kolar MP seeks protection for Tata workers

KOLAR, 4 APRIL

Kolar MP Mallesh Muniswamy has called on the Union Government to intervene regarding the employment practices at Tata Electronics in Narasapur, Kolar district, where iPhone assembly occurs. Speaking in the Lok Sabha, Muniswamy highlighted concerns over the company's policy of terminating employees after three years of service. He noted that while Tata Electronics has employed approximately 27,000, many are laid off after three years, with a small number being rehired.

The MP questioned whether the company is complying with labour laws and urged the Union Labour Minister to direct Tata Electronics not to dismiss workers at the conclusion of their three-year tenure. *—Salar News*

'HARASSED OVER WHATSAPP POST'

BJP worker dies by suicide in Bengaluru, blames Cong leaders

BENGALURU, 4 APRIL

A BJP worker allegedly died by suicide at his Bengaluru office in Nagawara on Friday. He alleged that an FIR filed against him by Congress leaders over a WhatsApp post pushed him to kill himself.

The deceased Vinay Somaiah, 35, accused Congress' Virajpet MLA AS Ponnanna, Madikeri MLA Mantar Gowda and party worker Thennir Mahina of harassing him. All three have been booked for abetment of suicide, Hennur police said.

Somaiah was a native of Gonimarur village in Kodagu district and worked as an Operations Manager at a manpower supply company.

Police said he was earlier arrested over an FIR filed by Mahina in Madikeri. Somaiah was accused of making derogatory posts about Ponnanna and Gowda. Though he was later released, Somaiah's family member told Salar News that he was disturbed since the incident. Following his death, Somaiah's brother Jeevan KS filed a complaint at Hennur Police Station, accusing Ponnanna, Gowda, and Mahina of abetment of suicide.

Somaiah was the admin of a WhatsApp group 'Kodagina Samasyegalu' (Problems in Kodagu). He was reportedly booked after a member shared a post criticising Ponnanna by juxtaposing his image with that of a toilet, igniting a political spat between BJP and Congress. Later, an FIR was filed against two people from the group, including Somaiah.

Accused Congress MLAs Ponnanna and Mantar Gowda; party worker Thennir Mahina, and the deceased BJP worker Vinay Somaiah **PHOTO: SALAR**

Hours before he was found dead, he posted a message in the group expressing distress over false cases, social media harassment, and defamation.

In his suicide note, Somaiah alleged that the FIR filed against him was politically motivated and added that he was made admin of the WhatsApp group just days before the arrest. "My ordeal began with that FIR. My name was dragged into something I didn't do. My photos were circulated widely without my consent, my family was embarrassed, and I was left with no dignity," the note reportedly states.

A family member told Salar News, "He couldn't handle the shame. That FIR broke him. We want justice. He was punished for someone else's words."

A senior investigation officer told Salar News, "We are treating the matter with utmost seriousness and have begun verifying digital evidence."

Protests erupted in Madikeri on Friday, with BJP workers demanding the arrest of the accused. Police were deployed to control the crowd. BJP state president BY Vijayendra is expected to issue a statement.

Madikeri Superintendent of Police K Ramarajan told Salar News, "Social media abuse is indeed a growing concern. While defamation is a legal option, if a person feels personally attacked, police cannot take suo motu action unless a complaint is filed. Filing cases against group admins for someone else's post is a grey area and must be handled with caution."

Meanwhile, Home Minister G Parameshwara assured a thorough probe. "Every post made on WhatsApp may not be accurate; it is crucial to examine its credibility," he told media.

Somaiah's body has been sent for post-mortem.

(Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support.)

—Salar News

Naval commanders conference in Karwar today

KARWAR, 4 APRIL

The first phase of the naval commanders' conference this year is slated to take place at the Indian Navy's strategically located base in Karnataka's Karwar on Saturday, officials said. On the occasion, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will flag off the Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) Sagar -- an initiative towards continued cooperation with IOR nations in pursuance of India's vision of Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security Across the Regions (MAHASAGAR), a senior Navy official said on Friday. The name 'Sunayna' is embossed on the hull of the ship. Preparations are in full swing at the naval base for the big-ticket event, with a makeshift shamiana erected near one of the piers at this key base in Karwar, located about 100 km from Goa's Dabolim airport.The conference will commence with phase one covering the flag-off on 5 April.—*PTI*

West Bengal voter list controversy, no appeals filed: EC

NEW DELHI, 4 APRIL

The Election Commission has revealed that no appeals have been lodged regarding discrepancies in West Bengal's electoral roll as of 7 January. This update comes after a delegation from the Trinamool Congress met with the poll panel to express concerns over duplicate voter cards. The Election Commission has outlined procedures for updating electoral rolls, emphasizing that political parties can appoint booth-level agents to verify rolls and report anomalies. Individuals with objections can appeal to the district magistrate or district election officer. A Trinamool Congress delegation, led by Rajya Sabha MP Sagarika Ghosh, submitted a memorandum to the Election Commission, requesting attention to the issue of duplicate Elector Photo Identity Cards (EPIC). The party also expressed opposition to linking Aadhaar cards with EPIC. —*PTI*

Cong announces Manmohan Singh fellowship scheme

NEW DELHI, 4 APRIL

Indian National Congress has unveiled the Dr. Manmohan Singh Fellowship Programme, a pioneering initiative aimed at nurturing future leaders. The programme seeks to mentor 50 mid-career professionals annually, providing them with intensive training and hands-on experience within the Congress party. According to Rahul Gandhi, Leader of the Opposition and former Congress president, "It's time that India's brightest minds brought their power to politics."Its primary objective is to build modern and progressive India by harnessing the expertise of accomplished professionals. The programme will identify and select 50 peoplr from across India through rigorous selection process. —*PTI*

RBI to issue Rs 10, Rs 500 banknotes with Guv's sign

MUMBAI, 4 APRIL

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced plans to issue new Rs 10 and Rs 500 banknotes featuring the signature of Governor Sanjay Malhotra. The notes will be part of the Mahatma Gandhi New Series and will retain the same design as existing banknotes in this series. All previously issued Rs 10 and Rs 500 banknotes will remain legal tender. Governor Sanjay Malhotra assumed office in December 2024, succeeding Shaktikanta Das. RBI has not disclosed a specific release date for the new banknotes. The introduction of new banknotes is a routine exercise aimed at maintaining integrity and security of India's currency. —*PTI*

Modi proposes 21-point plan for BIMSTEC

Suggests linking UPI with bloc, hosting forum for Home Ministers Mechanism in India

BANGKOK, 4 APRIL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday proposed a 21-point action plan that includes linking India's UPI with the payment systems of BIMSTEC nations and setting up a BIMSTEC Chamber of Commerce to strengthen engagement among the grouping's members.

Addressing the sixth BIMSTEC Summit, Modi said the grouping is an important forum to further global good.

"It is imperative we strengthen it and deepen our engagement. I proposed a 21-point Action Plan covering different aspects of our cooperation," Modi said on X.

The action plan also includes BODHI or BIMSTEC for Organised Development of Human Resource Infrastructure initiative. Under this, 300 youth from BIMSTEC countries will be trained in India every year.

Under the training and capacity-building initiative of the plan, Modi proposed scholarships to BIMSTEC students in the Forest Research Institute of India and Nalanda University, for young diplomats.

"Additionally, I propose linking India's Unified Payment Interface (UPI) with the payment systems in the BIMSTEC region," Modi said.

To boost business across BIMSTEC nations, Modi proposed setting up a BIMSTEC Chamber of Commerce, organise annual business summits and explore promoting trade.

He also presented the establishment of a Sustainable Maritime Transport Centre in India to enhance coordination. "The Maritime Transport Agreement signed today will strengthen cooperation in merchant shipping and cargo transport and accelerate trade," he said.

The Prime Minister stressed the need to continually expand the scope and capabilities of the BIMSTEC grouping, welcomed the institutionalising of the Home Ministers Mechanism and offered to host the first meeting in India.

"This forum can play a vital role in fighting against cybercrime, terrorism, and drug and human trafficking. In this regard, I propose to host its first meeting in India," he said.

The fourth joint exercise between BIMSTEC Disaster Management Authorities will be held in India this year. The BIMSTEC Summit, hosted by Thailand, is attended by India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Bhutan. —*PTI*

Ready to help, Modi tells Myanmar

BANGKOK, 4 APRIL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday told Myanmar's Senior General Min Aung Hlaing that India was doing everything possible to assist the nation in recovering from the aftermath of a massive earthquake that killed several thousands.

Modi met Senior General Min, the head of Myanmar's military government, on the sidelines of the BIMSTEC. This was the Prime Minister's first interaction with Senior General Min, who came to power in a military coup in February 2021.

"We are ready to help," Modi reportedly said.

"We also discussed bilateral relations between India and Myanmar," he later wrote on X.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets Senior General Min Aung Hlaing of Myanmar at BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok ***PHOTO: PTI***

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with his Nepalese counterpart KP Sharma Oli at the BIMSTEC Summit ***PHOTO: PTI***

Modi has 'intimate' meet with Nepali PM Oli

BANGKOK, 4 APRIL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday met Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and agreed to further deepen the partnership between the two countries and its peoples.

Oli, who is battling pro-monarchy protests in Nepal, met Modi on the sidelines of the 6th BIMSTEC summit that.

Modi said he had a "productive meeting" with Oli.

"India attaches immense priority to relations with Nepal.

We discussed different aspects of India-Nepal friendship, especially in sectors like energy, connectivity, culture and digital technology," Modi said on X.

A PMO statement said that Modi and Oli agreed to continue working towards further deepening the multifaceted partnership.

Oli described the interaction as intimate and said he was delighted to meet Modi.

Modi, Dissanayake expected to ink several agreements in Sri Lanka

Colombo, 4 April

India and Sri Lanka are expected to come out with around 10 outcomes, including boosting cooperation in areas of defence, energy security and digitalisation, following talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Anura Kumara Dissanayake on Saturday.

Modi is arriving in the Sri Lankan capital on Friday evening after concluding his trip to Bangkok.

Modi will be the first foreign leader to be hosted by Dissanayake in his capacity as the Sri Lankan president.

Modi last visited Sri Lanka in 2019.

An agreement on defence cooperation is likely to be among seven pacts expected to be finalised besides three more outcomes, people familiar with the matter said.

If signed, the MoU on defence cooperation is set to signal a major upward trajectory in India-Sri Lanka defence, leaving behind the bitter chapter relating to India pulling out the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) from the island nation around 35 years ago.

WAQF BILL PROTESTS

Security was tightened in communally sensitive regions, like Sambhal in Uttar Pradesh, and New Delhi as the government braced itself for protests after passing the contentious Waqf Bill ***PHOTO: PTI***

Protests erupt throughout the country; several demonstrators were detained in Ahmedabad Gujarat on Friday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Parliament ends with over 100 per cent productivity

NEW DELHI, 4 APRIL

The Parliament's Budget sessions which ended on Friday saw more than 100 per cent productivity in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Punches and counterpunches between the ruling BJP-led NDA who wanted to pass several contentious Acts, and opposition INDIA bloc, which showed signs of common purpose during as the session drew to a close.

Debates scored over disruption in this session during which 16 Bills were approved by the two Houses and the President's rule in Manipur received Parliament's nod during post-mid night discussions in both chambers.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju told reporters the productivity of Lok Sabha, which began with an address by President Droupadi Murmu on 31 January and ended on Friday with a recess from 14 February to 9 March, was 118 per cent and that of the Upper House 119 per cent.

He said history was created in Rajya Sabha when it sat without a break on Thursday to the early hours on Friday to debate and pass the Waqf Bill and endorsing President's Rule in Manipur.

Meanwhile, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla chided former Congress president Sonia Gandhi over her remark that Waqf Bill was "bulldozed through" the Parliament. He said a senior member casting aspersions on the House proceedings was "unfortunate".

"The Bill was in effect bulldozed through. The Bill is a brazen assault on the Constitution itself. It is very much part of the BJP's deliberate strategy to keep our society in a state of permanent polarization," Gandhi had said speaking to reporters. —*PTI*

682
Indians deported from US since January, says MEA

RS confirms Prez rule in Manipur

Rajya Sabha adopted a Statutory Resolution confirming the imposition of President's Rule in strife-torn Manipur with members across party lines backing the decision. Even though Opposition members slammed the Centre for its failure to restore law and order and control violence, the government said it was trying to bring normalcy in the state, asserting that its policy was not to impose President's Rule.

Centre rejects anti-NEET bill, Stalin fumes

CHENNAI, 4 APRIL

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Friday informed that the Assembly resolution seeking National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) exemption for the state that was sent for Presidential assent, has been declined and said the rejection was a "dark chapter in federalism."

The state would continue its struggle to abolish NEET and a meeting of the legislature party leaders has been convened on April 9 in this regard, he said. Expressing disappointment over the move Stalin said, "The rejection is a dark chapter in federalism."

The Bill proposed to allow admissions to medical courses solely based on Class 12 marks. It was passed in the Tamil Nadu Assembly in 2021 and re-adopted in 2022 after initial objections from Governor RN Ravi.

Leader of the Opposition and AIADMK chief, Edappadi K Palaniswami accused Stalin of politicising abolition of the national level screening test.

"The implementation of NEET has crushed the dreams of poor and rural students of becoming doctors," Stalin said. Many medical aspirants have died by suicide for either failing to crack NEET or apprehensions over clearing it. All political parties in the state, barring the BJP, support abolition of NEET. —*PTI*

1,000 BOTTLES DISPATCHED

UP govt sends Triveni Sangam water to devotees in Germany

PRAYAGRAJ, 4 APRIL

- Uttar Pradesh government on Friday said 1,000 bottles have been dispatched to devotees in Germany in the first international consignment to extend the spiritual essence.

Noting the growing demand overseas for the sacred water of Triveni Sangam, the Uttar Pradesh government on Friday said 1,000 bottles have been dispatched to devotees in Germany in the first international consignment to extend the spiritual essence of Maha Kumbh beyond India.

The grand Prayagraj Maha Kumbh from 13 January to 26 February witnessed an overwhelming turnout, with over 66 crore devotees taking a sacred dip at the Triveni Sangam, the UP government said in a statement.

"To extend the spiritual essence of this divine event beyond the festival grounds, the Uttar Pradesh government, through the Fire Department, ensured the distribution of Triveni's holy water to all 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh," the government said.

After the conclusion of the Maha Kumbh, the UP government resolved to deliver Sangam water as 'Maha Prasad' to devotees across the state who could not attend the event, it noted.

This shipment was facilitated by Acharya Mahamandaleshwar Swami Avdheshanand Giri of Shri Panch Dashnam Juna Akhara and is intended for devotees in Germany who could not make it to the pilgrimage, it added.

Committee in-charge Namita Singh revealed that more than 50,000 bottles of Triveni water, including a recent shipment to the Shiv Shambhu Group Society in Nagpur have already been distributed.

The domestic consignments were sent in 500 ml bottles, while the consignments to Germany were dispatched in 250 ml bottles. —*PTI*

'US tariffs not based on standard economics'

WASHINGTON, 4 APRIL

A top trade analyst has said the Trump administration's calculations that led to the tariffs are "not standard economics" and in many cases impose rates far higher than those that the targeted countries apply to US goods.

Julia Spies, Chief of Trade and Market Intelligence at the International Trade Center, said uncertainties remain about the exact way the US Trade Representative's office and other US officials came up with the tariffs.

She said the figures presented by Trump match the US trade balance — or imbalance — with a country, divided by imports from that country, "and that, divided by two, gives us the reciprocal tariff" imposed by the US.

"This is not standard economics," Spies told reporters by video to a UN briefing in Geneva. —*PTI*

Cops halt protest over WB school job verdict

KOLKATA, 4 APRIL

The West Bengal police have stopped a protest march by Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) from Karunamoyee in Salt Lake to Bikash Bhawan, the headquarters of the West Bengal School Service Commission.

The demonstration was held on 3 April in protest against alleged corruption in the 2016 SSC recruitment process, a day after the Supreme Court upheld the Calcutta High Court's decision to cancel the appointments of nearly 26,000 teaching and non-teaching staff.

The police forcibly removed the protestors squatting on the road, raising slogans against the state government and alleged corruption in school recruitments. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Veteran actor Ravikumar dies of cancer

CHENNAI, 4 APRIL

Celebrated actor Ravikumar, renowned for his iconic roles in both Tamil and Malayalam cinema, has passed away in Chennai after a prolonged battle with cancer. He died on Friday morning at 10.30am, confirmed the Nadigar Sangam, an association for film artistes. The actor was believed to be in his early 70s. Ravikumar's illustrious career included notable performances in Tamil films such as K. Balachander's 'Avargal', featuring legends Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan, as well as 'Pagalil Oru Iravu' and 'Ramanaa'. In Malayalam cinema, he appeared in classics like 'Avalude Raavukal', 'Lisa', 'Sarpam', and 'Angaadi'. His funeral will be held on Saturday. *—PTI*

Indore court acquits 2 officials in temple tragedy

INDORE, 4 APRIL

An Indian court has cleared two senior officials of the Beleshwar Mahadev Jhulelal Temple Trust of culpable homicide charges related to the 2023 Indore temple tragedy. The incident during Ram Navami celebrations resulted in the deaths of 36 devotees. Sewaram Galani, the trust's president, and Murli Kumar Sabnani, its secretary, were acquitted due to insufficient evidence. Despite 33 witnesses, including government officials, testifying against them, the court deemed the prosecution's case unconvincing. The temple, built illegally over a stepwell, collapsed during festivities. The trust officials had been accused of negligence and culpable homicide. *—PTI*

Hathras fire burns for 80hrs, causes ₹40–50 crore loss

HATHRAS, 4 APRIL

Over 80 hours have passed since a massive fire broke out at the Shri Hari Cold Storage facility in Hathras, and it remains uncontrolled. The blaze, which began around 2am on 1 April, has led to estimated losses of Rs 40 to Rs 50 crore, affecting stored grocery items like potatoes, dry fruits, and spices. Fire-fighting teams from neighbouring districts and experts have been deployed, yet the fire continues to rage. District Magistrate Rahul Pandey and Superintendent of Police Chiranjiv Nath Sinha inspected the site on Thursday night, directing officials to intensify efforts. Cold-storage owner Sunil Agarwal reported that the facility consists of five chambers, and losses are currently being assessed. Farmers and traders are on-site, closely monitoring the chaotic situation. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Taj Mahal is ASI's top revenue maker, says govt

NEW DELHI, 4 APRIL

The Taj Mahal has emerged as the highest-earning monument protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) through ticket sales over the past five years, said Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat in a response to a query in the Rajya Sabha. From FY19-20 to FY23-24, the iconic Mughal-era mausoleum consistently occupied the top position for ticket earnings. In the fiscal year FY19-20, the Agra Fort and Qutub Minar took second and third place, respectively. However, the FY20-21 data saw the Group of Monuments at Mamallapuram in Tamil Nadu and the Sun Temple at Konark claiming the subsequent positions. *—PTI*

Won't ban social media for under-13s: SC

Plea says it's a public health emergency; Apex court says it's a policy issue Centre should consider

NEW DELHI, 4 APRIL

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to examine a plea seeking to prohibit children below 13 from using social media, observing that it was a policy issue.

A bench of Justices BR Gavai and Augustine George Masih, however, granted a liberty to the petitioner to make a representation to the authority concerned. "It is a policy matter. You ask Parliament to enact the law," the bench told the petitioner's counsel. In case the petitioner made a representation, it would be considered within eight weeks, the court said.

"We, therefore, dispose of the petition with liberty to the petitioner to make a representation to the respondent authority," the bench said.

The plea, filed by Zep Foundation, sought directions to the Centre and others to incorporate provisions of mandatory parental controls for children between 13 and 18

years, including real-time monitoring tools, strict age verification and content restrictions in the draft Digital Personal Data Protection Rules.

The petition, filed through advocate Mohini Priya, further sought implementation of strict penalties for social media platforms failing to comply with children protection regulations.

"Research studies conclusively demonstrate that minors who are overexposed to social media suffer from heightened psychological distress, social isolation, addiction-like dependency, and severe cognitive impairments," the plea said.

Calling it a "pressing concern", the petitioner's counsel said, "This is not an issue about parental supervision. It needs some restrict age verification mechanism."

India, the plea said, was witnessing an alarming surge in depression, anxiety, self-harm and suicide rates among children, with overwhelming empirical evidence establishing a direct correlation between excessive social media usage and declining mental health.

Unchecked digital engagement of minors was akin to a public health emergency, the plea said. It noted that around 30 per cent of the country's population comprises children between the age of four and 18 years. *—PTI*

COUNTRIES WITH SOCIAL MEDIA REGULATIONS FOR CHILDREN

The Supreme Court ruling comes in the wake of several countries regulating social media use for children.

- **Australia:** Bans children under 16 from using Instagram, Facebook and TikTok.
- **Belgium:** Children under 13 require parental consent to create social media accounts.
- **China:** Douyin, the Chinese TikTok, has a daily limit of 40 mins for children under 14.
- **EU:** Legislation requires parental consent for processing personal data by any company or organisation of children under 16.
- **France:** Requires parental consent for children under 15 to create accounts.
- **Germany:** Minors between 13 and 16 require parental consent to use social media.
- **Italy:** Children under 14 require parental consent to create social media accounts.
- **South Korea:** Prohibits children under 15 from playing online games after midnight.

KRISHNA JANMABHOOMI: SC ISSUES NOTICE AGAINST CLUBBING SUITS

NEW DELHI, 4 APRIL

The Supreme Court on Friday issued notices on a plea of the mosque committee against the Allahabad High Court consolidating all suits of the Hindu side in relation to the Mathura Krishna Janmabhoomi–Shahi Idgah dispute.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justices Sanjay Kumar and KV Viswanathan noted the submissions of the mosque committee's counsel and advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain, representing some Hindu litigants, and issued the notices which would be served within seven days.

The mosque committee also filed a separate plea challenging another order of the Allahabad HC by which it said the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and the Archaeological Survey of India were to be made parties to the pending lawsuits of Hindu side.

The bench, however, deferred the hearing on the plea to 8 April when it would take up cases relating to the Krishna Janmabhoomi–Shahi Idgah dispute.

The HC on 23 October, last year, rejected an application of the Committee of Management, Trust Shahi Masjid Idgah seeking the recall of its 11 January order which consolidated all suits of the Hindu side in the case. *—PTI*

I'm a political leader, not a terrorist: Yasin Malik

NEW DELHI, 4 APRIL

Jailed JKLF chief Yasin Malik on Friday said in the Supreme Court that he was a "political leader and not a terrorist". He claimed seven Prime Ministers had engaged in a dialogue with him in the past. Appearing via video-conferencing before a bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan, Malik referred to the submission of Tushar Mehta, representing the CBI, that there were photos of him alongside terrorist Hafiz Saeed. "CBI's objection is that I am a security threat. I am not a terrorist and only a political leader,"Malik said. *—PTI*

Yasin Malik **PHOTO: PTI**

Collegium okays 8 judges for Allahabad HC

New Delhi, 4 April

The Supreme Court collegium has approved a proposal for the appointment of eight judicial officers as judges in the Allahabad HC. The collegium headed by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna held its meeting on 2 April and approved the proposal for appointment of Tej Pratap Tiwari, Jitendra Kumar Sinha, Abdul Shahid, Anil Kumar, Sandeep Jain, Avnish Saxena, Madan Pal Singh and Harvir Singh. *—PTI*

J'khand to cut power during Navami march

New Delhi, 4 April

The Supreme Court on Friday permitted the Jharkhand government and its power distribution company to cut power supply on Ram Navami procession routes to avoid accidents. A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justices Sanjay Kumar and KV Viswanathan took note of senior advocate Kapil Sibal's submission that this practice was going on for over two decades. Ram Navami is on 6 April. *—PTI*

Gokulam Gopalan (inset), along with his company Sree Gopalan Chit and Finance Co Ltd, is under scrutiny for purported FEMA violations **PHOTO: X**

ED raids 'Empuraan' producer's house

KOCHI/NEW DELHI, 4 APRIL

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has launched searches at the premises of Kerala-based businessman Gokulam Gopalan, one of the producers of the film 'L2: Empuraan', amidst an alleged foreign exchange violation case worth Rs 1,000 crore. The raids are being carried out at five locations across various states, including Chennai and Kochi, under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

Gopalan, along with his company Sree Gopalan Chit and Finance Co Ltd, is under scrutiny for purported FEMA violations involving certain NRIs and associated "unauthorised" transactions. The agency is also reportedly investigating potential "cheating" cases pertaining to the company under anti-money laundering laws.

This action follows the recent controversy surrounding 'L2: Empuraan', the sequel to the film Lucifer, which was released on 27 March in multiple languages. The film, one of the most expensive productions in Malayalam cinema, has sparked a debate due to its critique of right-wing politics and implications regarding the 2002 Gujarat riots.

In light of the uproar, producer Antony Perumbavoor announced earlier this month that more than two minutes of controversial scenes have been removed from the film, as actor Mohanlal expressed regret over the escalating situation.

The film features a star-studded cast, including Prithviraj Sukumaran, Manju Warrier, and Tovino Thomas. *—PTI*

Health scheme fraud: ED conducts raids in three states

RANCHI, 4 APRIL

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) launched widespread searches on Friday, targeting multiple states, including properties linked to Banna Gupta, the former Jharkhand health minister's private secretary, amid an ongoing money laundering investigation. The operation covered 21 locations in Jharkhand, Delhi, and West Bengal, conducted under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The targeted premises included those of Om Prakash Singh, Gupta, and several key suspects, such as consultants and past executives of associated firms. Central paramilitary personnel provided security for the ED officials during the early morning raids. Locations tied to the Jharkhand State Arogya Society and Third-Party Administrators like MD India, Safeway, and Medi Assist were also searched. *—PTI*

Central Reserve Police Force jawans stand outside the Shyam Enclave Apartment in Ranchi, during a raid conducted by the Enforcement Directorate on Friday. **PHOTO: PTI**

Virgin Atlantic has apologised for the inconvenience and is working to resolve the issue **PHOTO: X**

250 passengers stranded in Turkey lands in Mumbai

MUMBAI, 4 APRIL

After being stranded for more than 40 hours at a Turkey airport, over 250 Virgin Atlantic passengers, including Indians, landed in Mumbai on Friday night.

The passengers were stuck at the Diyarbakir Airport in Turkey after their Mumbai-bound aircraft from London was diverted to the airport on Wednesday.

"We're sorry that Virgin Atlantic flight VS358 from London Heathrow to Mumbai on 2 April was disrupted following an urgent medical diversion to Diyarbakır Airport in Turkey. Due to the nature of the landing, the aircraft required extensive technical inspection before the aircraft was cleared to operate… We apologise for the inconvenience," the spokesperson said.A passenger told PTI all passengers were sitting on the floor, and there were no blankets or vegetarian food.

The spokesperson added passengers were provided with hotel accommodation. *—PTI*

Heatwave likely in NW India; Delhi may hit 42°C

NEW DELHI, 4 APRIL

Northwest India is set to face a heatwave over the next six days, with temperatures in Delhi expected to soar up to 42 degrees Celsius, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). Affected regions include southern Haryana, Delhi, western Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and western Madhya Pradesh.

The IMD projects maximum temperatures in several parts of central and northwest India to increase by 2 to 4 degrees Celsius during this timeframe. In Delhi, temperatures could peak at around 42 degrees Celsius by 6 or 7 April.

Earlier this week, the IMD indicated that India is likely to experience above-normal temperatures from April to June, with an increase in heatwave instances across central and eastern India, as well as the northwestern plains. *—PTI*

Eight die of poisonous gas in MP well

KHANDWA, 4 APRIL

A tragic incident occurred on Thursday in Khandwa district, resulting in the death of eight individuals due to inhaling poisonous gas in a well. According to Khandwa Collector Rishav Gupta, the incident took place during the Gangaur Mata festival when several people entered a long-unused well to clean it.

While one person initially descended to clean, he became trapped in the mire, prompting seven others to attempt a rescue and ultimately become trapped as well.

Rescue operations were carried out by the police, State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), and Home Guards, but all eight individuals were recovered deceased.

In response to this tragic event, both the Collector and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav announced an ex-gratia payment of Rs 4 lakh for the families of those who lost their lives.

In a message posted on social media, Chief Minister Yadav extended his condolences, stating, "I pray to Almighty God to give all pious souls a place at His holy feet and grant strength to the family members to bear this immense sorrow." *—ANI*

GREEN WARRIORS WIN

UoH students end protest, boycott of classes

HYDERABAD, 4 APRIL

The University of Hyderabad Students' Union (UoHSU) has called off an indefinite protest and boycott of classes against the Telangana government's plans to develop the 400-acre land parcel bordering the varsity land, after the Supreme Court stayed any future activity till further orders.

The indefinite protest and boycott of classes was called off on Thursday following Supreme Court's stay and the protesting students started attending classes from Friday, UoHSU Vice President Akash Kumar said.

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Telangana government to explain the "compelling urgency" for clearing a large tree cover on a land parcel next to University of Hyderabad, and stayed any future activity till further orders.

Students celebrate after the Supreme Court halted the felling of trees in 400 acres of forested land **PHOTO: PTI**

The Telangana government decided to constitute a committee of ministers to engage in discussions with the UoH executive committee, civil society groups, students, and other stakeholders to address and find a solution regarding the land parcel adjacent to the varsity, after the Apex Court's directive.

The UoH students welcomed the Supreme Court's ruling.

The UoHSU and other unions and parties aligned with it had launched an indefinite protest and announced a boycott of classes from 1 April, against the state government's plan to develop the 400-acre land parcel in Kancha Gachibowli, citing ecological conservation concerns.

The UoH students have also been demanding the withdrawal of police personnel from the varsity's East Campus (the site of 400 acres of the disputed land) and other parts of the campus and a petition has been filed in the High Court in this regard, Akash Kumar added. *—PTI*

Dalit student protests PhD admission denial at BHU

VARANASI, 4 APRIL

- Sonkar secured second place in the entrance test, but he claims there were no reserved seats allocated for Scheduled Caste candidates, with all three seats going to General and OBC applicants

A Dalit student has been staging a protest outside the Vice Chancellor's residence at Banaras Hindu University (BHU) for 14 days over alleged denial of PhD admission.

Shivam Sonkar applied for a PhD position in the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, where six seats were announced – three reserved for Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) candidates and three to be filled through an entrance test. Although Sonkar secured second place in the entrance test, he claims there were no reserved seats allocated for Scheduled Caste candidates, with all three seats going to General and OBC applicants. He also highlighted that the department failed to fill three JRF seats.

Sonkar commenced his sit-in protest on 21 March, the day after the results were declared. Acting Vice-Chancellor Professor Sanjay Kumar assured him on 3 April that his admission request would be reconsidered, but he has vowed to continue protesting until he is granted admission.

The university administration clarified that only two seats were available for the entrance test – one for a General candidate and one for an OBC candidate. *—PTI*

IMPEACHMENT CELEBRATED

South Korea's Constitutional Court on Friday removed impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol from office. Following this people are seen shouting slogans and rallying on the streets to celebrate the impeachment. ***PHOTO: PTI***

Trump's dramatic trade war to affect global climate

US President Donald Trump's new trade war will not only send shockwaves through the global economy – it also upsets efforts to tackle the urgent issue of climate change.

Trump has announced a minimum 10 per cent tariff to be slapped on all exports to the United States. A 34 per cent duty applies to imports from China and a 20 per cent rate to products from the European Union. Australia has been hit with the minimum 10 per cent tariff. The move has prompted fears of a global economic slowdown. This might seem like a positive for the climate, because greenhouse gas emissions are closely tied to economic growth.

However, in the long term, the trade war is bad news for global efforts to cut emissions. It is likely to lead to more energy-intensive goods produced in the US, and dampen international investment in renewable energy projects. Traditionally, growth in the global economy leads to greater emissions from sources such as energy use in both manufacturing and transport. Conversely, emissions tend to fall in periods of economic decline.

Trade tensions damage the global economy. This was borne out in the tariff war between the US and China, the world's two largest economies, in 2018 and 2019. Trump, in his first presidential term, imposed tariffs on billions of dollars worth of imports from China. In response, China introduced or increased tariffs on thousands of items from the US. As a result, the International Monetary Fund estimated global gross domestic product (GDP) would fall by 0.8 per cent in 2020.

The extent of its true impact on GDP is difficult to determine due to the onset of COVID in the same year. However, Trump's tariff war is far broader this time around, and we can expect broadscale damage to global GDP. In the short-term, any decline is likely to have a positive impact on emissions reduction. We saw this effect during the COVID-19 pandemic, when global production and trade fell. But unfortunately, this effect won't last forever. Every country consumes goods. And according to Trump's trade plan, which aims to revive the US manufacturing base, the goods his nation requires will be produced domestically rather than being imported.

Trump has announced a minimum 10 per cent tariff to be slapped on all exports to the United States ***PHOTO: PTI***

Unfortunately, this US production is likely to be inefficient in many cases. A central tenet of global trade is that nations focus on making goods where they have a competitive advantage – in other words, where they can manufacture the item more cheaply than other nations can. That includes making them using less energy, or creating fewer carbon emissions. If the US insists on manufacturing everything it needs domestically, we can expect many of those goods to be more emissions-intensive than if they were imported.

Globally, investment in renewable energy has been growing. The US trade war jeopardises this growth. Renewable energy spending is, in many cases, a long-term investment which may not produce an immediate economic reward. The logic is obvious: if we don't invest in reducing emissions now, the economic costs in the future will be far worse. However, the US tariffs create a new political imperative. Already, there are fears it may trigger a global economic recession and increase living costs around the world.

National governments are likely to become focused on protecting their own populace from these financial pressures. Business and industry will also become nervous about global economic conditions. And the result? Both governments and the private sector may shy away from investments in renewable energy and other clean technologies, in favour of more immediate financial concerns.

The COVID experience provides a cautionary tale. The unstable economic outlook and higher interest rates meant banks were more cautious about financing some renewable energy projects. And according to the International Energy Agency, small to medium-sized businesses became more reluctant to invest in renewable energy applications such as heat pumps and solar panels.

What's more, the slowing in global trade during the pandemic meant the supply of components and materials vital to the energy transition was disrupted. There are fears this disruption may be repeated following the US tariff move. Few nations can afford to impose retaliatory tariffs on US imports. Free global trade has worldwide benefits. It helps reduce poverty and stimulates innovation and technology.

Trump's tariff war weakens global trade, and will slow the world's progress towards decarbonisation. It is a most uncertain time – both for the world's economy, and its climate. – The Conversation

SALAR

Attack on Taiwan is just a show of global power

Is China intent on a D-Day style invasion of Taiwan? Certainly that has been the tone of some of the reporting following the emergence of photos and videos depicting massive new Chinese barges designed for land-to-sea military operations. The fact that China launched a two-day military drill in the Taiwan Strait on 1 April, 2025, has only intensified such fears.

To me, the curious thing regarding these musings about a potential war involving China, which has one of the world's most advanced militaries, is that it is supported by reference to technology first used some 80 years ago – specifically, the Mulberry Harbours, floating piers that allowed Allies to deploy land vehicles onto the beaches at Normandy on 6 June, 1944.

As an expert on the history and geopolitics of the Mulberry Harbours, I believe using the World War II example obscures far more than it clarifies with regard to the geopolitical situation today. Indeed, while the new Chinese ships may be operationally similar to their historical forebears, the strategic situation in China and Taiwan is far different.

The possibility of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan, an island the Chinese Communist Party sees as part of its territory, is perhaps the most pressing security issue for countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Beijing has increasingly ratcheted up the aggressive rhetoric toward the government in Taipei during the premiership of President Xi Jinping. While one reading of Xi is that his rhetoric is in part a strategic move to burnish Chinese power globally, labeling Taiwan as a renegade or breakaway province is, for many, a clear indication of an intention to invade and bring the island within the geography of Chinese sovereignty.

From the US perspective, the Trump administration gave early signals that it saw China as the main threat to its national security, though Washington's commitments to the defense of Taiwan remain uncertain, much like the president's ultimate policy views toward Beijing.

Aside from the geopolitics, any China decision to invade Taiwan would mean attempting an extremely challenging military operation that is, historically speaking, a risky proposition. Seaborne invasions have often led to high casualties or even outright failure.

The Gallipoli landings on the coast of Turkey during World War I, for example, led to the withdrawal of mainly Australian and New Zealand forces after high casualties and barely any territorial gains. In World War II, island-hopping by US forces to push back Japan's advance achieved strategic goals – but at a high human cost. The difficulty posed by sea-to-land invasion is not just the battles on Day 1, it is the logistical challenge of continuing to funnel troops and materiel to sustain a push out from the beachhead. That's where the barges come into play.

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill was skeptical of opening a front against Nazi Germany by a landing on the French coast – a position that frustrated the US.

The main concern of Churchill and his generals was the logistical puzzle. They reasoned that Germany would either retain control of French ports or sabotage them, and that tanks, guns, food, soldiers and other necessities were not going to be brought up from reserve via ports.

The Mulberry Harbours fixed that problem by creating a set of floating piers that would rise up and down with the tide by being fixed to sophisticated anchors. Ships could moor to these piers and unload needed material.

The piers were protected by an inner ring of concrete caissons, dragged across the channel and sunk into position, and an outer breakwater of scuttled ships. The Mulberry Harbours were a combination of cutting-edge pier technology and improvisation.

The images of Chinese invasion barges today show that the technology has advanced, but the principle of an operational need for logistical support of a beachhead breakout is the same. Yet the geography of any invasion is very different.

In World War II, the Mulberry Harbours were part of an invasion from an island to conquer a continent. But a Chinese invasion of Taiwan would be the inverse – from a continent to an island.

The calculation for China is very different. Certainly, barges would help an invasion across the Taiwan Strait. But China sees Taiwan as part of its near waters, and it wants to secure those waters from global competition.

Beijing views the US as having established a military presence just off its coastline from World War II to the present day, making the western Pacific another set of US far waters across. – *The Conversation*

The emergence of photos and videos depicting massive new Chinese barges designed for land-to-sea military operations ***PHOTO: PTI***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Manoj Kumar the actor-filmmaker who blended patriotism with cinema

- It was a fortuitous happenstance for the Kumar who channelled his Partition angst to tell stories of an evolving India in films. They were all blockbusters, finding ready audience and each helping carve a niche all his own.

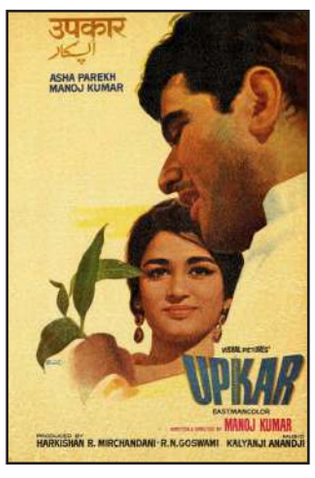
Manoj Kumar will forever be Bharat for generations of filmgoers, an actor-filmmaker who framed his patriotism in celluloid just as a nascent India was coming into its own and beginning to realise its dreams and potential.

It was a fortuitous happenstance for the filmmaker who channelled his Partition angst to tell stories of an evolving India in films such as "Upkar", "Purab Aur Paschim" and "Roti, Kapda aur Makaan" in the mid 1960s and 1970s. They were all blockbusters, finding a ready audience at the time and each helping carve a niche all his own.

Kumar died in a Mumbai hospital in the early hours of Friday. He was 87, a one-time star battling multiple health issues who had long retreated into the shadows. His screen name was Bharat in several films, a cleverly chosen moniker that fused into his identity as a filmmaker and an actor and he came to be known as 'Bharat Kumar' to many.

Kumar, who found many takers for his brand of patriotic idealism, was also the romantic hero of films such as "Himalaya Ki God Mein", "Do Badan" and "Patthar Ke Sanam". His first success came in 1962 with "Hariyali Aur Raasta" opposite Mala Sinha.

The films were huge hits and so were the songs. Remember "Tauba Yeh Matwali Chaal", "Mehboob Mere Mehboob", "Chaand Si Mehbooba Hogi Meri", "Ek Pyaar Ka Nagma Hai" and "Patthar Ke Sanam". But Manoj Kumar's legacy will always be tied to his brand of patriotism rooted in an earlier era. Some of his films, including "Purab Aur Paschim", could be viewed as conservative and simplistic with an idea of India and the West that may sit uncomfortably with today's audiences.



Manoj Kumar, 87, was battling multiple health issues and had long retreated into the shadows ***PHOTO: PTI***

He made his directorial debut with 1967's "Upkaar" in which he also played the lead. It was an exploration of then prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri's popular slogan Jai Jawan Jai Kisan. The film, which looks at rural vs city life and the sacrificing heroism of its protagonist, a farmer turned soldier for his country, captured the imagination of the crowds. Kumar won a National Award for the movie, which also gave Pran his breakout role from the always villain to the kind and wise Malang Chacha. It was a turning point for Pran's career.

Two years before "Upkaar" was "Shaheed", a biopic of freedom fighter Bhagat Singh in which Kumar played the central role. Just maybe, the success of the film helped crystallised his patriotic zeal. Among his biggest hits is the lavish multi-starrer "Roti Kapda Aur Makaan", which he produced, directed and acted in. Starring among others Zeenat Aman, Amitabh Bachchan and Shashi Kapoor, it shows the first signs of disenchantment by looking at themes of unemployment and corruption alongside the idea of a perfect India.

The songs in all his films have survived the test of times. Think of a patriotic anthem and chances are you will hit on a Manoj Kumar song with reflective lyrics and lilting tunes. There is "Mere Desh Ki Dharti Sona Ugle" from "Upkaar", "Bharat Ka Rehne Wala Hoon" from "Puram Aur Paschim" and "Mehangai Maar Gayee" from "Roti Kapda…".He was born Harikrishan Giri Goswami in Abbottabad in now Pakistan in 1937. Ten years later, when the subcontinent was divided, the family left their home and travelled to Delhi. Those were traumatic years. He lost his two-month-old brother who could not be cared for properly in the hospital because of riots raging in the city.

He graduated from Delhi University's Hindu College, where he actively participated in theatre activities. Known for his good looks, the actor decided to leave for Mumbai, determined to make a mark in Hindi cinema.Harikrishan became Manoj Kumar many years later. "I remember the time when I went to watch Dilip Kumar sahib in 'Shabnam' which was released in 1949. It is because of him that I became a fan of cinema. I fell in love with his character in the film whose name was Manoj... I instantly decided that if and whenever I become an actor, I will keep my name as Manoj Kumar," Kumar told PTI in an interview in 2021.

Dilip Kumar and his wife Saira Banu became lifelong friends.He said in the interview that he was overjoyed when Dilip Kumar agreed to work in "Kranti", the 1981 period drama that was a massive hit and also the last big success of his career.Though Kumar was first seen on screen in "Fashion" in 1957, he was noticed three years later in "Kaanch Ki Gudia" in 1960. His last film appearance was "Maidaan-e-Jung" in 1995.

He quit acting after that but returned as director to launch his son, Kunal Goswami, in the 1999 film "Jai Hind", which had a patriotic theme as well. The film, however, did not do well at the box office. Through all the ups and downs of his career, Kumar's image as the maker for films patriotic endured.During the Emergency period in 1977, Kumar was contacted by the Indira Gandhi-government to make a film. According to an old interview with Lehren, Kumar roped in writer duo Salim-Javed but the project fell through as he was unwilling to make changes suggested in the script.

Kumar famously took the government to court for the losses he suffered for "Shor" and "Dus Numbri", which were released on Doordarshan just two weeks after their theatrical run in accordance with the policy at the time.Much later, he threatened to take the makers of "Om Shanti Om" to court for parodying his famous palm across face gesture in the 2007 Shah Rukh Khan starrer. Both director Farah Khan and Shah Rukh apologised to him.

Kumar was a much awarded actor. He won the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2015 by when he was sadly confined to a wheelchair and could not stand up to receive the honour. He was also awarded the Padma Shri in 1992.

Manoj Kumar will live on every time somebody reaches for a patriotic playlist. That legacy will endure. —*PTI*

PHOTO: Wikipedia

British comedian Russell Brand charged with rape

LONDON, 4 APRIL

Actor-comedian Russell Brand has been charged with rape and a multiple counts of assault between 1999 and 2005, UK police said in a statement on Friday. The 50-year-old, who lives in Oxfordshire, southern England, was once one of Britain's most high-profile comedians and broadcasters. The ex- husband of US pop singer Katy Perry recently became a social commentator on the internet. The UK police said he charged with one count of rape, one count of indecent assault, one count of oral rape and two counts of sexual assault. The charges relate to four separate women. "The Met's investigation remains open and detectives ask anyone who has been affected by this case, or anyone who has any information, to come forward and speak with police," the statement said. *—Agencies*

Indian-origin Catholic priest shot dead in US

SENECA, 4 APRIL

A Catholic priest of Indian origin, Father Arul Carasala, has been fatally shot at his parish rectory in Seneca, Kansas. Archbishop Joseph Naumann announced the tragic news on Facebook, describing the act as a "senseless act of violence." Father Carasala, who had served as pastor at Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church since 2011, was shot by a man who approached him at the rectory. He died shortly after at the local hospital. A suspected shooter is reportedly in custody. The motive behind the shooting is unclear. Kris Anderson, the parish's director of religious education, said an older man walked up to Father Carasala and shot him three times. Archbishop Naumann paid tribute to Father Carasala, describing him as a "devoted and zealous pastor" who faithfully served the Archdiocese for 20 years. The community of Seneca is in shock following the priest's death. *—PTI*

After Columbia & Princeton, Brown under Trump fire

WASHINGTON, 4 APRIL

After Columbia and Princeton University it is now the Brown University's turn to be in the receiving end of the ire of the Trump administration, which is planning to halt more than half a billion dollars in contracts and grants awarded to the University. Nearly USD 510 million in federal contracts and grants are on the line, said a White House official who was not authorized to speak publicly about the plan and spoke on condition of anonymity. In an email Thursday to campus leaders, Brown Provost Frank Doyle said the university was aware of "troubling rumours" about government action on its research money. "At this moment, we have no information to substantiate any of these rumours," Doyle said. Dozens of universities are facing federal investigations into antisemitism following a wave of pro-Palestinian protests last year, but the administration has focused special attention on elite colleges. *—PTI*

HONOURED

Singapore-based Indian-origin artist Vijayalakshmi Mohan was among five people who were awarded for promoting and passing on their skills and traditions in intangible cultural heritage to Singapore's community and younger generation *PHOTO: PTI*

China hits back with 34% tariff on all US goods

Trump had announced 34% tariffs on Chinese imports

BEIJING, 4 APRIL

China on Friday hit back at the US by slapping an additional 34 per cent tariff on all imported American products in retaliation to President Donald Trump's decision to impose a similar tariff on Chinese exports in the latest escalation of the trade war between the top two economies of the world. The tariffs will be imposed on all imported US products starting April 10, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

China filed a lawsuit with WTO after the US slapped "reciprocal tariffs" on trading partners, the report said. The commerce ministry here said that Beijing also decided to ban the export of dual-use items to 16 US entities.

Trump announced 34 per cent tariffs on Chinese imports on Wednesday, unveiling them as part of a sweeping "Liberation Day" package aimed at reshaping American trade policy. The tariffs brought the total levies on China to 54 per cent, close to the 60 per cent Trump threatened during his poll campaign.

On Thursday, the Chinese Commerce Ministry hit hard on Trump's tariffs on its USD 438 billion exports to the US, the third-largest after ASEAN and European Union (EU). Separately, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said the US tariffs gravely violated WTO rules and undermined the rules-based multilateral trading system.

"We have emphasised more than once that trade and tariff wars have no winners. Protectionism leads nowhere. We urge the US to stop doing the wrong thing, and resolve trade differences with China and other countries through consultation with equality, respect and mutual benefit," he said.

Even though Chinese officials argue that the new tariffs would hurt US consumers more, these are expected to lower substantial exports to the US hitting heavily its domestic industries that are already reeling under the impact of the slowdown of the economy. *—PTI*

Russia delaying truce talks, say Britain, France

BRUSSELS, 4 APRIL

Vladimir Putin *PHOTO: X*

Britain and France on Friday accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of dragging his feet in ceasefire talks to bring a halt to fighting in Ukraine and ramped up pressure on Moscow by insisting that he owes the United States an immediate answer.

Russia has effectively rejected a US proposal for a full and immediate 30-day halt in the fighting after a Kremlin official said on Monday that Moscow views efforts to end its three-year war with Ukraine as "a drawn-out process."

"Our judgment is that Putin continues to obfuscate, continues to drag his feet," British Foreign Secretary David Lammy told reporters at NATO headquarters, standing alongside his French counterpart Jean-Noel Barrot in a symbolic show of unity.

Britain and France are helping to lead a multinational effort known as the "coalition of the willing" to set up a force to police any future peace in Ukraine.

Lammy said that while Putin should be accepting a ceasefire, "he continues to bombard Ukraine. It's civilian population. It's energy supplies. We see you, Vladimir Putin. We know what you are doing."

Barrot said that Ukraine had accepted ceasefire terms three weeks ago, and that Russia now "owes an answer to the United States." US President Donald Trump has expressed frustration with Putin and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy after he promised last year to bring the war to a swift conclusion.

"Russia has been flip-flopping, continuing its strikes on energy infrastructure, continuing its war crimes," Barrot said. "It has to be yes. It has to be no. It has to be a quick answer."

He said that Russia shows no intention of halting its military campaign, noting that Putin on Monday ordered a call-up intended to draft 1,60,000 conscripts for a one-year tour of compulsory military service. *—PTI*

Yoon Suk Yeol waves to his supporters as he comes out of a detention center in Uiwang, South Korea, on 8 March *PHOTO: PTI*

S Korea's court sacks Yeol over martial law

SEOUL, 4 APRIL

- In a nationally televised hearing, the court's acting chief Moon Hyung-bae said the eight-member bench found Yoon's actions were unconstitutional and had a grave impact

South Korea's Constitutional Court unanimously removed Yoon Suk Yeol from office on Friday, ending his tumultuous presidency and setting up a new election, four months after he threw the nation into turmoil with an ill-fated declaration of martial law.

The verdict capped a dramatic fall for Yoon, a former star prosecutor who became president in 2022. In a nationally televised hearing, the court's acting chief Moon Hyung-bae said the eight-member bench found Yoon's actions were unconstitutional and had a grave impact.

"Given the negative impact on constitutional order caused by the defendant's violation of laws and its ripple effects are grave, we find that the benefits of upholding the constitution by dismissing the defendant far outweigh the national losses from the dismissal of the president," the court said.

While anti-Yoon protesters celebrated when the verdict was given, many supporters cried and screamed. No major violence has been reported by late afternoon.

A presidential election will be held within two months. But a festering divide over Yoon's impeachment could complicate South Korea's efforts to deal with crucial issues like US tariffs and other "America First" policies, observers say.

Yoon said he deeply regrets failing to live up to the public's expectations, but stopped short of explicitly accepting the verdict. "It has been the greatest honour of my life to serve our nation," Yoon said.

Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, the country's acting leader, vowed to maintain public safety and order and ensure a smooth transition to the next administration.

Yoon, 64, a conservative, was impeached by the National Assembly on December 14 on charges of violating the constitution and other laws by suppressing assembly activities, attempting to detain politicians, and undermining peace across the country. *—PTI*

Israeli airstrikes in Gaza kill 100 overnight

DEIR AL BALAH, 4 APRIL

A devastating series of Israeli airstrikes has resulted in the deaths of at least 100 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. The deadliest incident occurred at a school in Gaza City, where 27 people, including 14 children and five women, lost their lives.

According to Palestinian medical authorities, the school in the Tuffah neighbourhood was hit, leaving 70 people wounded, with some sustaining critical injuries. The Israeli military claimed it had targeted a "Hamas command and control centre" in the area, stating that it had taken steps to minimise harm to civilians.

However, Hamas has vehemently condemned the strike on the school, labelling it a "heinous massacre" of innocent civilians. The incident has sparked widespread outrage and condemnation from human rights groups, who have accused Israel of committing war crimes.

The conflict in Gaza has resulted in the displacement of around 280,000 Palestinians since Israel ended the ceasefire with Hamas last month. Israel has imposed a month-long blockade on food, fuel, and humanitarian aid, exacerbating the crisis in the region.

The death toll in Gaza continues to rise, with Israel reporting around 20,000 militants killed, while Gaza's Health Ministry states over 50,000 Palestinians have been killed – half of them women and children. The international community has called for an immediate ceasefire and an end to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. *—PTI*

Mourners carry the coffin of Ali Bdeir, the son of a Hezbollah official Hassan Bdeir, who according to a Hezbollah official was killed alongside his father by an Israeli strike near Beirut on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Hungary decides to leave Int'l Criminal Court

Budapest, 4 April
Hungary will begin the process of withdrawing from the International Criminal Court (ICC), an official has said, as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arrived to red carpet treatment in Budapest despite an arrest warrant from the world's only permanent global tribunal for war crimes and genocide. Orbán's chief of staff, GergelyGulyás said that "the government will initiate the withdrawal procedure" for leaving the court. Netanyahu's visit to Hungary was his second foreign trip since issue of the warrant in November, the first being his visit to the US in February. The ICC believes that Netanyahu and former defence minister Yoav Gallant had committed crimes against humanity in connection with the war in Gaza. *—PTI*

You can't annex a country, Danish PM tells US

NUUK, 4 APRIL

Denmark's prime minister is wrapping up a three-day visit to Greenland on Friday after telling the US "you cannot annex another country", even with the argument that international security is at stake.

Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen travelled to the strategically critical Arctic island as US President Trump seeks control of Greenland. He argues that Greenland, a semi-autonomous territory belonging to the Kingdom of Denmark, is critical to US security.

During his visit to a remote US military base in Greenland, Vice President JD Vance had accused Denmark of under-investing in the territory.

Speaking alongside Greenland's incoming and outgoing leaders on 3 April, Frederiksen argued that Denmark, a NATO ally, has been a reliable friend.

She said that "if we let ourselves be divided as allies, then we do our foes a favour. And I will do everything I can to prevent that... This is about the world order that we have built together across the Atlantic over generations: you cannot annex another country, not even with an argument about international security."

The Danish leader said that, if the US wants to strengthen security in the Arctic, "let us do so together".

Political parties in Greenland, which has been leaning towards eventual independence from Denmark for years, last week agreed to form a broad-based new coalition government in the face of Trump's designs on the territory, angering many. *—PTI*

NO NOTICE SERVED

Trump admin revokes more student visas

WASHINGTON, 4 APRIL

PHOTO: FREEPIK

A crackdown on foreign students is alarming colleges, who say the Trump administration is using new tactics and vague justifications to push some students out of the country. College officials worry the new approach will keep foreigners from wanting to study in the US.

Students stripped of their entry visas are receiving orders from the Department of Homeland Security to leave the country immediately, a break from past practice that often permitted them to stay and complete their studies. Some students have been targeted over pro-Palestinian activism or criminal infractions or even traffic violations. Others have been left wondering how they ran afoul of the government.

At Minnesota State University in Mankato, President Edward Inch told the campus Wednesday when they ran a status check in the database of international students they learned that visas had been revoked for five international students for unclear reasons. At North Carolina State University, two students from Saudi Arabia left the US after learning their legal status as students was terminated, the university said.

In two weeks, the government apparently has widened its crackdown. Officials from colleges around the country have discovered international students have had their entry visas revoked and, in many cases, their legal residency status terminated by authorities without notice including students at Arizona State, Cornell, North Carolina State, the University of Oregon, the University of Texas and the University of Colorado.

Miriam Feldblum, president and CEO of the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration said, "In the past, when international students have had entry visas revoked, they generally have been allowed to keep legal residency status. They could stay in the country to study, but would need to renew their visa if they left the US and wanted to return. Now, increasing numbers of students are having their legal status terminated, exposing them to the risk of being arrested. None of this is regular practice." *—PTI*

US aid cuts stall demining operations in Sri Lanka

MANKULAM, 4 APRIL

PHOTO: X

Thavarathnam Pushparani fought on the front lines for the now-defeated Tamil Tiger rebels against the Sri Lankan forces in its decades long separatist war and later took to clearing the land mines on the same battle lines.

But the Trump administration's suspension of aid threatens Sri Lanka's demining operations, pushing the livelihoods of thousands like her into uncertainty.

More uncertain for Sri Lanka now is its obligation to rid the island nation of mines by 2028 under the Ottawa Treaty, which it ratified in 2017.

Pushparani too joined the Tamil Tigers while still a teenager in school. Her husband died in battle in 1996 and her daughters were raised in the "Sencholai" home. She got engaged in demining activities after reuniting with her children in 2009.

The demining operations started in 2002 during a ceasefire period and the US has been the major donor among 11 countries supporting the effort, contributing about 34 per cent of the USD 250M grants received for the projects so far. The US share was 45 per cent of the grants received last year. *—PTI*

PHOTO:PTI

Gold snaps 5-day winning streak, Rs 93,000 per 10g

NEW DELHI, 4 APRIL

Gold prices plunged by Rs 1,350 to Rs 93,000 per 10g, bringing an end to its five-day record rally, in the national capital on Friday amid weak trend in the international markets, according to All India Sarafa Association. On Thursday, gold of 99.9 per cent purity had climbed Rs 200 to hit a fresh peak of Rs 94,350 per 10g. Snapping a five-day winning streak, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also declined by Rs 1,350 to Rs 92,550 per 10g from Thursday's closing level of Rs 93,900 per 10g. On the global front, spot gold fell USD 21.74 or 0.70 per cent to USD 3,093.60 per ounce. Spot silver fell 1.69 per cent to USD 31.32 per ounce. *—PTI*

Rupee pares initial gain, settles at 85.25 against US Dollar

MUMBAI, 4 APRIL

The rupee pared its initial gains and settled for the day higher by 5 paise at 85.25 (provisional) against the US dollar on risk aversion in global markets amid trade tariff worries. Forex traders said during the day, the domestic unit gained on weak US dollar index and a sharp decline in crude oil prices, while weak domestic markets and foreign fund outflows capped sharp gains for the local unit. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 85.07 then touched an intra-day high of 84.96 and a low of 85.34 against the greenback. The unit ended the session at 85.25 (provisional) against the dollar, registering a gain of 5 paise from its previous closing level. *—PTI*

Tea industry worried over pest attack on crops

KOLKATA, 4 APRIL

The Tea Research Association (TRA) has raised alarms regarding the impact of greenfly infestations on tea crops in Assam and West Bengal, noting it as a significant threat over the past two years. The TRA, which focuses on research and development in the tea industry with backing from the Tea Board, reported that these sap-sucking insects have caused severe damage, particularly during the dry months, with yield reductions of up to 55 per cent in some areas. TRA Secretary Joydeep Phukan highlighted the devastation during the second flush period from May to July, when tea gardens earn over 30 per cent of their annual revenue. Concerns have been voiced about the potential invasion of more aggressive greenfly strains, especially near international borders, prompting former Tea Board chairman PK Bezboruah to call for urgent action. *—PTI*

ebm-papst to invest Rs 340 cr in Chennai plant

CHENNAI, 4 APRIL

ebm-papst India, the Indian arm of the renowned Germany-based ebm-papst Group, has inaugurated the groundbreaking ceremony for a new manufacturing facility in Chennai, with an investment of Rs 340 crore. Expected to be operational by late 2026, the facility will create approximately 700 jobs, underscoring the company's commitment to expanding local production. With a global turnover of Rs.2.40 billion in 2023-24, ebm-papst has been active in India since 1996, boasting four sales offices, two manufacturing sites, and several warehouses. The new plant, situated on a 14.2-acre site, aims to cater to markets across the Asia-Pacific, Middle East, and Africa. This investment is part of the company's strategy to enhance supply chain resilience and support its 'Local for Local' approach. *—PTI*

Markets join global sell-off, US tariff sparks tension

There's sharp correction in crude prices and a heavy sell-off in market

MUMBAI, 4 APRIL

Investors' wealth dropped by Rs 10 lakh crore on Friday as the BSE Sensex slumped over 900 points to crash below the 76,000 level due to an across-the-board sell-off, tracking weak global markets amid growing global trade war fears.

Equity benchmarks Sensex on Friday slumped over 900 points to crash below the 76,000 level due to an across-the-board sell-off, tracking weak global markets amid growing global trade war fears.

Besides, a sharp correction in crude prices and a heavy sell-off in market heavyweights Reliance Industries, Larsen & Toubro and Infosys added to the gloom, analysts said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 930.67 points or 1.22 per cent to settle at 75,364.69. During the day, it plummeted 1,054.81 points or 1.38 per cent to hit an intraday low of 75,240.55.

BSE Sensex tumbled 930.67 points or 1.22 per cent and NSE Nifty declined 345.65 points or 1.49 per cent

PHOTO: FREEPIK

The broader NSE Nifty declined 345.65 points or 1.49 per cent to close at 22,904.45. In the session, the 50-share benchmark gauge 382.2 points or 1.64 per cent to 22,867.90.

Tata Steel was the biggest loser in the Sensex pack, sliding 8.59 per cent, followed by Tata Motors, Larsen & Toubro, Adani Ports, IndusInd Bank, Tech Mahindra, Reliance Industries, Sun Pharmaceutical, HCL Technologies, Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, and NTPC, were the major laggards.

On the other hand, Bajaj Finance, HDFC Bank, Nestle India, ICICI Bank, ITC, Asian Paints and Axis Bank were among the gainers.

In broader markets, BSE midcap gauge plunged 3.08 per cent, while smallcap index declined 3.43 per cent.

"Markets slumped in sync with the crash in global equities with sectors crashing over 2-6 per cent on broad-based selling," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

Investors fear Trump's reciprocal tariff policy will fuel recession and drive inflation in the US going ahead and engulf other key economies. A sharp fall in metal and oil stocks is indicating that demand could be hit amid slowdown fears, Tapse added.

In Asian markets, Tokyo and Seoul ended lower. Hong Kong and Shanghai stock markets remained closed for the holidays. *—PTI*

Forex kitty jumps to $665.396B

MUMBAI, 4 APRIL

India's forex kitty jumped USD 6.596 billion to USD 665.396 billion during the week ended 28 March, the RBI said on Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves rose by USD 4.529 billion to USD 658.8 billion, the RBI said on Friday.

This is the fourth consecutive week of increase in the reserve, which was on a declining trend recently due to revaluation along with forex market interventions by RBI to help reduce volatilities in the rupee. The forex reserves had increased to an all-time high of USD 704.885 billion in end-September 2024.

PHOTO:FREEPIK

For the week ended 28 March, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased by USD 6.158 billion to USD 565.014 billion, the data released on Friday showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves increased by USD 519 million to USD 77.793 billion during the week, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were down by USD 65 million to USD 18.176 billion, the apex bank said.

India's reserve position with the IMF was also down by USD 16 million at USD 4.413 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed. *—PTI*

Sebi starts new format audit reports of MIIs

NEW DELHI, 4 APRIL

Markets regulator Sebi on Friday introduced a standardised format for system and network audit reports of market infrastructure institutions (MIIs) such as stock exchanges, clearing corporations, and depositories -- to enhance the audit efficiency.

Under this, Sebi will assign unique IDs to each observation in a bid to simplify the tracking of both current and historical audit issues.

This new framework aims to improve data quality, ensure compliance with regulatory requirements, and streamline the monitoring of audit observations.

This will apply to audits conducted from the fiscal year 2024-25, or the second half of the fiscal year, depending on the audit frequency.

"The standardized format for system and network audit report would help to increase the data quality, capture of relevant information as per regulatory requirements in a streamlined and standardized manner across MIIs, monitor compliance requirements in a more focused manner, ease of traceability of current/historical open observations found during audit at the end of MII and Sebi by assigning a unique ID to each observation," Sebi said in its circular.

PHOTO:ANI

Presently, all MIIs are required to conduct system and network audit and each MII has adopted a different template for such reporting.

As per the circular, the standardized system and network audit report format include several key sections to ensure comprehensive reporting.

Going by the format, MIIs are required to disclose basic information such as name, address, and contact details of the auditee and audit team.

Furthermore, they need to disclose audit details such as period, methodology, and tools used. The IT environment overview highlights major projects or developments undertaken during the audit period, providing insights into the technological landscape of the MII.

The scope of audit involves the compliance with relevant regulatory requirements and identifies any technical glitches encountered. *—PTI*

Coal production crosses 1B tonne milestone in FY25

NEW DELHI, 4 APRIL

India achieved a historic milestone as it crossed one billion tonnes of coal production on 20 March in 2024-25, surpassing last fiscal year's 997.83 million tonnes (MT).

With the fifth-largest coal reserves and as the second-largest consumer, coal remains crucial, contributing 55 per cent to the national energy mix and fuelling over 74 percent of total power generation.

According to the Ministry of Coal, the coal sector's success is attributed to the tireless efforts of Coal Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), private players, and the dedicated workforce of around 5 lakh mine workers across more than 350 coal mines.

India's coal production reached 1.04 billion tonne (provisional) in 2024-25, compared to 997.83 MT in 2023-24, marking a 4.99 per cent growth.

Production from commercial, captive, and other entities also saw a remarkable surge, reaching 197.50 MT (Provisional) a 28.11 per cent increase frothe previous year's record of 154.16 MT.

Parallely, the Indian coal sector achieves a notable reduction in imports. —ANI

IEX reports 19% rise in trade volume in FY25

NEW DELHI, 4 APRIL

The Indian Energy Exchange (IEX) registered 19 per cent year-on-year rise in trade volume to 121B units (BUs) in FY25, a company statement said on Friday.

A total of 178 lakh renewable energy certificates (REC) were traded during the year, marking a twofold rise as compared to the previous year, the company statement said.

The next REC trading sessions at the exchange are scheduled for 9 and 30 April.

In March 2025, IEX achieved the highest-ever monthly electricity traded volume of 11,215M units (MUs), posting 29 per cent increase year-on-year.

A total of 13 lakh RECs were traded during the month, up 18 per cent over March 2024.

In the electricity market, the day-ahead market (DAM) achieved 61,311 MU in FY25, as compared to 53,353 MU in FY24, a rise of 15 per cent.

In March, the DAM volume increased by 19 per cent to 5,547 MU from 4,654 MU in the same month last financial year. *—PTI*

Pharma stocks tumble on Trump's tariff threat

NEW DELHI, 4 APRIL

Shares of pharmaceutical companies on Friday tumbled by up to 10 per cent amid reports that the Trump Administration will soon announce tariffs on imports and emphasised that the measures will be "unprecedented".

According to reports, President Trump has said that tariffs on pharmaceuticals and semiconductors will be announced shortly, emphasising that the measures on pharmaceutical imports will be unprecedented.

The US has announced 26 per cent reciprocal tariffs on India saying New Delhi imposes high import duties on American goods.

Reacting to the reports the stock of Aurobindo Pharma plunged 11 per cent to Rs 1,049.85 apiece on the, Laurus Labs tumbled 9.5 per cent to Rs 561.55, Ipca labs decreased 9.3 per cent to Rs 1,357.80, Lupin dipped 8.41 per cent to Rs 1,918.20, Biocon 7.03 per cent to Rs 321.25, and Cipla declined 7 per cent to Rs 1,390.35.

In Morning trade on Friday, the BSE healthcare index declined 1,347.88 points or 3.22 per cent to 40,522.91. *—PTI*

US tariffs to impact India indirectly: NITI member

NEW DELHI, 4 APRIL

US reciprocal tariffs will have a small indirect effect on India given the domestic economy's low dependence on foreign trade, NITI Aayog member Arvind Virmani said on Friday. He further said that in the medium term, negative factors emanating from imposition of tariff would be minimised with implementation of the first phase of the proposed USA-India Bilateral Trade Agreement.

Arvind Virmani

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Economist said final BTA with US will aim to enhance potential gains during next five to 10 years. US has announced 26 per cent reciprocal tariffs on India saying New Delhi imposes high import duties on American goods. *—PTI*

Retaliation will hit the world

The nature of broad-based tariffs announced by US President Donald Trump and potential retaliation by other countries is likely to initiate a vicious cycle of global growth, says a report by SBI Research.

The world export volume may decline significantly to 1.3 percent from 2.9 percent in 2024. This will also impact the US core inflation, which may go up by 1.4 percentage points to 2.2 percentage points.

The report adds that US GDP may decrease by USD 438.4 billion, or 1.45 percent, and GDP per household will decrease by USD 3,487 per year.

The report, authored by Soumya Kanti Ghosh Group, Chief Economic Adviser, State Bank of India, adds that the overall global growth slowdown and heightened global financial volatility will have a greater impact on India. India faces a reciprocal tariff of 26 percent from April 9. *—ANI*

Swastika Infra aims to raise Rs 200 cr from IPO

NEW DELHI, 4 APRIL

Swastika Infra, an engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) solutions provider in power distribution, infrastructure projects, has filed preliminary papers with markets regulator Sebi seeking its approval to raise funds through an Initial Public Offering (IPO).

The Jaipur-based company's IPO is a combination of a fresh issue of shares worth Rs 200 crore and an Offer For Sale (OFS) of 19.2 lakh shares by promoters and other shareholders, according to the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP).

The company is looking to mop up Rs 40 crore in the pre-IPO round, and if such placement is completed, the fresh issue size will be reduced.

PHOTO:X

Proceeds from the fresh issue to the tune of Rs 145 crore have been earmarked for funding, incremental working capital requirement; besides, a portion will be used for general corporate purposes, the draft papers filed on March 30 showed.

Swastika Infra specialises in the execution of power distribution infrastructure projects.

The company executed EPC power projects, covering a total of 8,519.50 circuit kilometers of distribution lines as of February 2025.

Its portfolio includes 34 completed power distribution infrastructure projects across four Indian states.

The company also procures and sells power cables and other electrical items.

In addition to revenue from its EPC power projects, the company also derives a proportion of revenue from the procurement and selling of power cables and other electrical items. *—PTI*

$1.4 BILLION STAKE

India ranks 10th in pvt AI investments

UNITED NATIONS, 4 APRIL

India and China are the only developing countries in the world with significant private investments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) in 2023, according to a UN report. India ranks 10th.

The 2025 Technology and Innovation Report, issued by UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), also states that India ranked 36th in 2024 on the "Readiness for Frontier Technologies" index, improving its position from 48th in 2022.

India ranks 36th out of 170 nations on a global index measuring a country's readiness for frontier technologies, improving its ranking from last year, according to the report.

The index combines indicators for ICT deployment, skills, research and development (R&D) activity, industrial capacity, and access to finance.

PHOTO:FREEPIK

India ranks 99th for ICT, 113th for skills, 3rd for R&D, 10th for industrial capacity, and 70th for finance. The report highlights that while developed countries typically lead in technology preparedness, significant investments in AI have been made by emerging economies, with India ranking 10th globally for AI investment at USD 1.4 billion.

The report also notes that China, Germany, India, UK, and US show scientific strength in the field of AI.

US leads the world in terms of private investment in AI, at USD 67 billion in 2023, or 70 per cent of global AI private investment.

The report noted that AI is expected to reach USD 4.8 trillion in market value by 2033, becoming a prominent force in digital transformation. India's government has initiated the India AI Mission to bolster its AI ecosystem and educational opportunities, signalling a strategic focus on enhancing its technological capabilities. *—PTI*

Zepto CEO hits back at Piyush's jibe

NEW DELHI, 4 APRIL

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal's scathing remarks on Indian startup ecosystem and its innovation priorities have drawn sharp reaction from the industry, with Zepto CEO Aadit Palicha putting up a strong defence citing the company's contribution to jobs, FDI and terming it a "miracle in Indian innovation".

Underlining the role played by consumer internet companies in pushing technology-led innovation, Palicha, a co-founder of quick commerce company Zepto, argued that the startup ecosystem, the government, and the owners of large pools of Indian capital need to actively support the creation of these local champions, "not pull down the teams that are trying hard to get there".

"It is easy to criticise consumer internet startups in India, especially when you compare them to the deep technical excellence being built in US/China. Using our example, the reality is this: there are almost 1.5 Lakh real people who are earning livelihoods on Zepto today - a company that did not exist 3.5 years ago," Palicha said in a LinkedIn post.

The Zepto co-founder statement comes after Goyal on Thursday asked the Indian startup community to shift their focus from grocery delivery and ice cream making to high tech sector like semiconductor, machine learning, robotics and artificial intelligence. *—PTI*

Rohit hit on knee in nets, misses out match against LSG

LUCKNOW, 4 APRIL

Senior batter Rohit Sharma missed out on Mumbai Indians' match against Lucknow Super Giants in the Indian Premier League here on Friday after he was hit on the knee during a nets session, according to captain Hardik Pandya.India captain Rohit has been struggling so far this IPL season, having scored 0, 8, and 13 in the three matches he has played."Rohit got hit in the knee in the nets and he misses out," Pandya said at the toss. "He should be back soon."—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

World Boxing Cup: Hitesh enters title round

NEW DELHI, 4 APRIL

National champion Hitesh displayed fine tactical acumen to get the better of France's Makan Traore 5-0 in the 70kg bout to become the first Indian to reach the final in the World Boxing Cup Brazil 2025 on Thursday.The Indian initially adopted a cautious approach against Olympian Traore but was always on the lookout for an opportunity to counterattack.The strategy allowed Hitesh to control the pace of the bout—*PTI*

Barcelona host Real Betis amid Sevilla clash

BARCELONA, 4 APRIL

Barcelona has its eyes on a possible treble this season and two critical clashes with Real Madrid that will directly impact two of those title shots, but first it has to play an in-form Real Betis in La Liga on Saturday.Barcelona and Betis are the hottest teams in the Spanish league as it approaches the final stretch with nine league games to go.Barcelona has won nine league games in a row and is undefeated in 2025 through 21 games across all competitions. Sixth-placed Betis has also found its stride with six straight wins in La Liga, including big victories over Madrid and fierce city rival Sevilla.Hansi Flick has Barcelona playing its best soccer since the departure of Lionel Messi nearly four years ago. Now, the team has three chances to finish the campaign with a major title: It leads the Spanish league by three points over Madrid.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Joburg Open: Pranavi T-4 has five holes to play

SYDNEY, 4 APRIL

India's Pranavi Urs was in fine form at 5-under through 13 holes before play was suspended in the opening round of the Joburg Ladies Open due to a flooded course at the Modderfontein Golf Club here.When play was suspended, eight groups were yet to complete their rounds and will resume on Friday. Pranavi, tied for fourth with five holes remaining, is among them. England's Mimi Rhodes was able to finish 18 holes and continue her dream start in her rookie season, leading with a round of 65 (-8) on the Par-73 course. Pranavi, a former winner on her home Tour, started with a bogey on the Par-5 tenth but then recovered quickly with five birdies on the remaining eight holes on the back nine.—*PTI*

Kuldeep vs Noor: Spin to define CSK-DC

It's an afternoon game in scorching Chennai

CHENNAI, 4 APRIL

CSK VS DC

HEAD TO HEAD	
PLAYED:	30
CSK Won:	19
SRH Won:	11

CSK vs DC Match starts at **3.30 pm IST**

Noor Ahmed's guile will meet its perfect match in Kuldeep Yadav's artistry, as two wrist spinners will drive the narrative during the under-par Chennai Super Kings' important Indian Premier League match against an impressive Delhi Capitals here on Saturday.

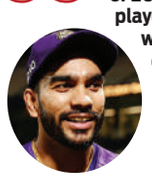
It will be an afternoon game in the scorching Chennai heat, and the kind of tracks on offer will certainly make it a 50-50 match. Kuldeep, with an economy rate of 5.25, is the best in terms of quality among the four spinners expected to be in action during the game.

Afghanistan spinner Noor has so far got nine wickets at an equally impressive economy rate of 6.83, and he can certainly prove to be a handful during the middle overs with balls expected to grip the surface. It will be an engaging contest as both wrist spinners are very different.

While Noor bowls at a quicker pace and mostly takes the ball away from the right-handers, wily customer Kuldeep has perfected the art of using the angles of the crease and varying the pace of his deliveries.

In the case of Noor, the trajectory is flatter, while Kuldeep gives the ball more air while also changing his arm speed as per the requirement. In terms of batting, DC will certainly hold a slight advantage with the middle-order having a bit more firepower this year with the presence of Ashutosh Sharma, Vipraj Nigam, and the seasoned KL Rahul, who is expected to play with lot more freedom given that there are no captaincy burden on him in his new franchise. —*PTI*

> It doesn't matter if you're getting 20 lakh or 20 crore. I'm a player of the team who wants to contribute to the team's victory
>
> -Venkatesh Iyer, Kolkata Knight Riders vice-captain



Focus on Jaiswal's form as RR takes on PBKS

Jaiswal is India's batting heir apparent to Virat

MULLANPUR, 4 APRIL

PBKS VS RR

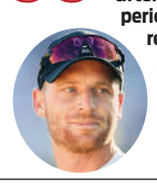
HEAD TO HEAD	
PLAYED:	28
PBKS Won:	12
RR Won:	16

PBKS vs RR Match starts at **7.30 pm IST**

An out-of-sorts Yashasvi Jaiswal would want his on-field exploits to make headlines rather than his off-field decisions as Rajasthan Royals, led by regular skipper Sanju Samson, will aim to keep a marauding Punjab Kings batting lineup in check in their IPL clash here on Saturday.

Jaiswal, India's batting heir apparent to Virat Kohli, recently made news for switching from Mumbai to Goa, reportedly due to differences and ego clashes with an ageing, out-of-favour India star in his state team. The stylish left-hander has also looked scratchy in his three knocks with scores of 1, 29, and 4 and is expected to shoulder a lot more responsibility in this line-up, where Samson does most of the heavy-lifting. One reason for Jaiswal's poor form could be the lack of game time since his ODI debut against England in February, after which he was dropped from the Indian Champions Trophy squad. It also remains unclear how Jaiswal has taken the Rajasthan Royals' decision to appoint Riyan Parag as the stand-in skipper, despite the Assamese all-rounder not even being close to him in terms of sheer cricketing quality. That Jaiswal is desperate for a bigger leadership role in the national and IPL set-up has become an open secret after his Goa switch, but every move will prove to be counter-productive if he doesn't get back among runs quickly. In the IPL universe, the form can turn from bad to worse in no time. Also, in the three matches that Riyan led the side, no one saw any special leadership spark that would make him stand out despite his relative inexperience. —*PTI*

> Since stepping down as England captain after a challenging period, embracing a relaxed mindset, and mental clarity in the IPL
>
> - Jos Buttler, forefront of Gujarat Titans



Legal dispute over Diego Maradona's brand pops up in trial

BUENOS AIRES, 4 APRIL

The legal dispute over the capitalization of Diego Maradona's brand crept into the trial of seven medical professionals accused of negligence in the soccer star's death, emerging in the testimony of his younger sister.

Maradona's image rights are held by a company called Sattvica in which Maradona's two sisters and lawyer Matías Morla are shareholders, while none of Maradona's five children profit from it.

The court in the Buenos Aires suburb of San Isidro called a recess Thursday after a back-and-forth between lawyers when one of them asked Claudia Nora Maradona if she had secured a contractual agreement with her late brother.

"First of all, in life we receive gifts. Then he left us the brands," she replied when asked by Fernando Burlando.

Burlando is the lawyer for Dalma and Gianinna Maradona, two of the star's daughters, who have sued their aunt, other relatives, and close associates, claiming fraud in the exploitation of the Maradona brand.

When Burlando tried to delve into the details of the deal, Claudia Nora Maradona's lawyer, Pablo Jurado, objected to his client's further comment on the matter, arguing that it could harm her legally. After this, the three judges deliberated for nearly an hour.

Claudia and Rita Maradona, Maradona's sisters; his lawyer during his lifetime, Morla; and three others stand accused in the civil suit. —*PTI*

DJOKOVIC, GAUFF ASK GRAND SLAM TOURNAMENTS FOR MORE MONEY

WASHINGTON, 4 APRIL

Novak Djokovic, Jannik Sinner, Aryna Sabalenka, and Coco Gauff are among 20 leading tennis players who signed a letter sent to the heads of the four Grand Slam tournaments seeking more prize money and a greater say in what they called "decisions that directly impact us."

The letter, a copy of which was obtained Thursday by The Associated Press, is dated 21 March and begins with a request for an in-person meeting at this month's Madrid Open between representatives of the players and the four people to whom it was addressed: Craig Tiley of the Australian Open, Stephane Morel of the French Open, Sally Bolton of Wimbledon and Lew Sherr of the U.S. Open.

At the bottom of the message are the handwritten signatures of 10 of the top 11 women in the rankings from the week of 3 March. —*PTI*

Trump again says he wants to see PGA Tour & LIV Golf merged

DORAL, 4 APRIL

President Donald Trump arrived at his Doral resort Thursday for a LIV Golf event, shortly after reiterating to reporters aboard Air Force One that he wants to see the two men's professional tours united.

The president has spoken out on the subject before, and Trump has been involved in some of the talks that may eventually unify the PGA Tour and Saudi-funded LIV. Those talks have gone on for at least a year, and how or if a deal can be struck is unclear.

"Ultimately, hopefully, the two tours are going to merge. That'll be good. I'm involved in that too," Trump told reporters on the flight to Miami. "But hopefully we're going to get the two tours to merge. You have the PGA Tour and the LIV Tour. And I think having them merge would be a great thing."

Trump called the LIV golfers a roster that includes Brooks Koepka, Bryson DeChambeau, Phil Mickelson, Dustin Johnson, and others "some of the best players in the world." Trump was driven to the edge of the hotel property late Thursday afternoon, shortly after he arrived, in a golf cart by his son Eric Trump, who played in the LIV Miami pro-am at Doral earlier Thursday alongside Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and others. Trump waved to a few dozen supporters who were nearby and briskly walked into a nearby building. —*PTI*

Time to say goodbye: Kevin to leave Man City

MANCHESTER, 4 APRIL

PHOTO: X

Kevin De Bruyne says he will leave Manchester City - confirming these are his "final months" with the Premier League champion.

The 33-year-old Belgium playmaker, who is out of contract this summer, announced the news in an emotional post on his social media channels on Friday.

"Nothing about this is easy to write, but as football players, we all know this day eventually comes. That day is here," he wrote.

De Bruyne joined City from Wolfsburg for around $71 million in 2015 and has gone on to win every major honor with the club, including six Premier League titles and the Champions League.

In all he has won 14 major trophies at City and established himself as one of the all-time Premier League greats.

"This city. This club. These people... gave me EVERYTHING. I had no choice but to give EVERYTHING back! And guess what we won EVERYTHING," he wrote. "Whether we like it or not, it's time to say goodbye."

De Bruyne did not say if he would take part in the Club World Cup, which runs through June and July in the United States.

There was also no mention in the post about where he wanted to play next. —*PTI*

F1 JAPANESE GP 2025

McLarens on top as grass fires, crashes disrupt practice at Suzuka

PARIS, 4 APRIL

Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris topped the times for McLaren as four red flags, two caused by trackside grass fires, wreaked havoc with the second practice session for the Japanese Grand Prix on Friday.

Australian Piastri, the winner of the last race in China, squeezed in a lap of one minute, 28.114 seconds between the last two red flags to take the honours on a sunny but cool day at the Suzuka circuit.

Championship leader Norris was fastest in first practice and second in the later session, some fourth tenths of a second ahead of Racing Bulls' French rookie Isack Hadjar.

The level of disruption in the second session meant several drivers were unable to get out for extended runs, leaving plenty for them and their teams to figure out in the final practice before qualifying on Saturday. The second session was little more than seven minutes old when Jack Doohan's Alpine spun off the track at the first corner, skidded across the gravel, and slammed into a wall.

The Australian rookie, who had been replaced by reserve driver Ryo Hirakawa for first practice, looked shaken as he was helped to walk away from the wreckage of his car. —*PTI*

McLaren's Lando Norris is seen through cherry blossoms during practice

PHOTO: X / @LANDONORRIS

150 HOPE FOR MEDALS

India to prep for Olympics 2036 at 10 training centres

NEW DELHI, 4 APRIL

The Sports Authority of India (SAI) began its preparation for the Olympics in 2036. India has already held discussions to host the mega event and as per reports, has sent an official proposal for the same. According to reports, India to build 10 training centres for preparation each centre will have one discipline and 150 athletes will be training in the facilities. As things stand, the athletes will be picked from the upcoming Khelo India Youth Games, which will be hosted from 4-15 May to in Bihar.

A total of 28 various sporting events will be hosted in the forthcoming Khelo India Youth Games. In the meantime, newly-elected International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Kristy Coventry opened up on the idea of selection for future hosts of the global event. The 41-year-old didn't reveal the ideas but noted that she will do that soon.

Recently, she was questioned about India's bid being converted to 'accelerated targeted dialogue' before incumbent president Thomas Bach leaves office on 23 June. Speaking on the same, the first woman and first African

PHOTO: PTI

IOC president stated that the management will follow the process and she will share more details in the future.

"At the end of the day, there is a process in place and that process is ongoing and that will remain, as far as I know, for the next few months. I do think that we need to involve the members in the selection of the future host, and I have a few ideas and may be willing to share those, maybe next week," she said at the press conference after her election. Over 10 countries are said to be interested in hosting the 2036 Olympics. Out of which, Qatar and Saudi Arabia from Asia have also shown heavy interest. Meanwhile, it is unclear when the IOC will announce the name of the host. Notably, Los Angeles will host the global event in 2028, followed by Brisbane in 2032. —*PTI*

JAVELIN EVENT FEATURING NEERAJ TO BE HELD IN PANCHKULA ON 24 MAY

NEW DELHI, 4 APRIL

The much-anticipated, star-studded global javelin event in India, featuring double Olympic medallist Neeraj competing against some of the best in the business, will be held in Panchkula on 24 May.

The event has been christened as the Neeraj Chopra Classic as the Indian star is actively involved in its organisation. World Athletics, the sport's governing body, has granted a category A status to the event which will be held at the Tau Devi Lal Stadium. World Athletics website, however, does not list the event as part of its Conti nental Tour, for which the calendar was published before the start of the season. —*PTI*